



STAFF REPORT

Title: Naloxone Usage by City Employees

Meeting Date: September 19, 2023

Executive Summary:

The City of Cold Lake recognizes that some employees may encounter the hazard of synthetic opioids while performing their duties. Synthetic opioids are incredibly potent drugs that can cause overdose or death as a result of exposure to a relatively small amount. The drug naloxone can reverse the body's response to synthetic opioid exposure or poisoning for a temporary measure of time. It is available in two different forms, injectable and intranasal spray, and can be used by anyone. There are risks, liability, and hazards associated with the administration of either form of naloxone. In consideration of these factors, the City proposes a corporate wide practice to regulate which employees may carry naloxone and who they may administer naloxone to.

Background:

Opioids and associated risks

Opioids are a naturally occurring substance that are derived from the seeds of the opium poppy flower. Synthetic versions of opioids can be manufactured in laboratories and include hydrocodone, oxycodone, and fentanyl. Opioids are used medically (and legally) for severe pain-relief and can often produce "euphoric" effects for users. It is the experiencing of these "euphoric effects" that can lead to misuse, abuse, addiction to, and illegal usage of opioid drugs.

Fentanyl, in particular, is incredibly concentrated with a potency of fifty (50) to one hundred (100) times greater than morphine and hundreds of times more potent than heroin. Carfentanil is used in veterinary medicine for very large animals and is a fentanyl analog, but one hundred (100) times more potent than fentanyl.

The use of illicit drugs, such as cocaine, heroin, and methamphetamine, is growing in communities across Canada. Also growing is the alteration of these illicit drugs by "cutting" or mixing in synthetic opioids. The amount of synthetic opioids included in these illicit drugs is uncontrolled and unknown to those who consume them, which can lead to overconsumption. Overconsumption of synthetic opioids can cause death and a fatal dose of a synthetic opioid is estimated to be between two (2) to three (3) milligrams. This amount is comparable to several grains of salt.



The Minister of Mental Health and Addiction has determined that the on-going high rate of overdoses as a result of the use of the drug fentanyl and other opioids is a health condition that necessitates action to prevent a “public health emergency” as defined in the *Public Health Act* (M.O. 702/2023).

These potent, synthetic opioids may pose a risk to City employees who, through the performance of their duties, come into contact with these substances or individuals who have, or are using, these substances. An individual may be exposed to fentanyl, or one of its analogs, through inhalation, absorption through skin contact, the eyes, and nasal passages, or even ingestion if someone were to touch their face with hands that were contaminated with a synthetic opioid.

Naloxone

The administration of naloxone is one way to address the hazard presented by exposure to synthetic opioids. It will not prevent potential exposure to synthetic opioids; however, it can reverse a known, or suspected opioid exposure or poisoning within three (3) to five (5) minutes. Naloxone is available in the form of an injectable dose or intranasal spray. The intranasal spray variant of naloxone is commonly referred to by its brand name, “Narcan.” Both forms of naloxone produce the same effect, despite the different methods of administration. Administering naloxone to an individual who has taken a non-opioid drug or who is experiencing another medical issue, will not cause any harm. It should be noted that naloxone is only a temporary measure of relief to synthetic opioid exposure and its administration is not a substitute for professional medical attention and follow-up. Emergency medical services should always be contacted if a situation arises where naloxone administration is required.

On January 26, 2023 the Minister of Mental Health and Addiction signed Ministerial Order 702/2023 authorizing

Peace officers employed by an authorized employer (as defined in Alberta’s Peace Officer Act); and any person who provides services on a full-time, part-time or contractual basis as an employee, consultant, contractor, intern or volunteer (“worker”) at any work site in Alberta to administer naloxone by an invasive procedure on body tissue below the dermis, when indicated for emergency use for opioid overdose outside hospital settings, to another person suspected of suffering from an overdose of opioids

This Ministerial Order permits employers to authorize employees to use naloxone in the course of their duties, should they encounter an opioid poisoning.



Current Employee usage of Naloxone

At this time, members of the Municipal Enforcement department carry injectable naloxone. To date there has been no formalized process on the usage of naloxone for City employees and its use has not been regulated for certain categories of employees by Administration. In addition to the naloxone being carried by Municipal Enforcement employees, expired naloxone was recently found during a routine facility inspection of the Marina in the first aid cabinet. This expired naloxone was turned into a local pharmacy for proper disposal. It is unknown when or how this naloxone was placed in the Marina's first aid cabinet.

The City is required through legislation, as well as our own Health and Safety Program, to eliminate, or if that is not reasonably practicable, control workplace hazards. It is the intent of Administration to formalize the assignment of who may use naloxone in the course of performing their job duties and regulate the use of naloxone for the safety of City employees.

Risks and Liability

There are risks with the administration of naloxone, especially if it is administered to another person, whether this be another City employee or member of the public. In addition to the hazards associated with the drug itself, the administration of naloxone also includes, but is not limited to, the following hazards:

- Physical hazards:
 - sharps usage when using injectable naloxone; and
 - violence and harassment. It is important to note that a person who has been given naloxone may become agitated and/or confused, which has the potential to result in harassment or violence against City employees.
- Biological and health hazards:
 - Exposure to blood; and
 - Exposure to other bodily fluids.
- Psychological hazards:
 - Stress and trauma when dealing with a drug poisoning situation.

Since any of the above-noted hazards have the potential to result in a workplace injury, there is an increased risk for the City's liability in this regard.

The City is not medical professionals, extreme caution must be exhibited in providing direction to employees in relation to direction to deliver medical services. For that reason, Administration does not direct employees to administer naloxone.



Health and Safety

While naloxone has the potential to reverse opioid poisoning, its administration and usage does pose a health and safety risk to someone administering it to another individual. This risk has caused some municipalities, such as the City of Edmonton, to enact policies which prohibit classes of their employees from administering naloxone in the course of their job duties. This approach aims to protect employees from hazards that are associated with naloxone administration, including, but not limited to those listed above, and infection by narcotics. There are examples of municipal employees being seriously injured, including a fatality, while attempting to administer naloxone to a member of the public.

In consideration of the health and safety of its employees, Administration has determined that it is appropriate to only authorize only Municipal Enforcement employees, specifically Community Peace Officers and Bylaw Officers, to carry and use naloxone. Of all City employees, Municipal Enforcement employees were deemed most likely to encounter synthetic opioids in the course of their duties. The City has made the decision to authorize this group of employees to administer naloxone for their own safety as well as the safety of their colleagues. Administration has procured naloxone in the form of Narcan nasal spray for these employees. Administration has authorized two categories of Narcan nasal spray usage for Municipal Enforcement employees:

1. Administration to self; and
2. Administration to a colleague.

In addition to supplying Narcan nasal spray to reverse the effects of synthetic opioid poisoning, Administration will attempt to mitigate the exposure of Municipal Enforcement employees to synthetic opioids by supplying the following personal protective equipment (PPE):

- Safety glasses or another form of eye protection;
- Nitrile gloves;
- Respiratory protection; and
- Tyvek coveralls and booties, if necessary.

Municipal Enforcement employees will be responsible for maintaining and using the above listed PPE to help prevent exposure to opioids.

Use of naloxone

Administration has determined that Municipal Enforcement employees will be permitted to use Narcan nasal spray. This intranasal spray version of naloxone is no less effective than injectable naloxone, but there are less hazards associated with its use. These employees are permitted to administer Narcan nasal spray to themselves or their



colleagues in response to exposure to synthetic opioids. Administering Narcan nasal spray to members of the public is prohibited while working. Should Municipal Enforcement employees, or other City employees, encounter a situation that indicates there has been an overexposure to opioids involving a member of the public, they should call 911 immediately to report the situation and summon emergency medical services.

Municipal Enforcement will be required to complete Standard First Aid “C” training and take Narcan Administration training that has been approved by Administration before they are authorized to carry Narcan nasal spray. Prior to entering an area where Municipal Enforcement has reason to believe that they may be exposed to synthetic opioids, they are to complete a field-level risk assessment and implement the appropriate controls to minimize exposure to synthetic opioids, including wearing the required PPE. Additionally, any situation requiring the administration of Narcan nasal spray will be considered a safety incident and is required to be reported following approved incident reporting procedures.

The intention of Administration is to protect the health and safety of all employees by ensuring a clear and consistent approach for employees who have the potential to encounter synthetic opioids in the course of performing their duties. Administration believes that limiting the use of Narcan nasal spray to Municipal Enforcement employees is the most effective method of protecting the health and safety of all employees while still recognizing and addressing the hazard of potential exposure to synthetic opioids.

We understand that this approach is consistent with the approach currently authorized by the City of Edmonton and City of Calgary.

Alternatives:

For information only

Recommended Action:

For information only

Budget Implications (Yes or No):

No

Submitted by:

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