

Fentanyl: The Real Deal **Video Release Event**

Bureau of Justice Assistance, Office of Justice Programs
Grand Ballroom, Room 3101
810 Seventh Street, NW
Washington, DC 20531

August 30, 2018

Frequently Asked Questions and Overview

Overview of *Fentanyl Safety Recommendations for First Responders* and the companion training video, *Fentanyl: The Real Deal*

- America's first responders—including law enforcement officers, firefighters, and emergency medical services (EMS) providers—are increasingly likely to encounter fentanyl and other synthetic opioids during the course of their daily activities, such as overdose calls and traffic stops, arrests, and searches.
- To help first responders protect themselves when the presence of fentanyl is suspected or encountered, a Federal Interagency Working Group coordinated by the National Security Council developed *Fentanyl Safety Recommendations for First Responders* and the companion training video, *Fentanyl: The Real Deal*.
- Informed by expertise from the medical, public health, law enforcement, fire/EMS, and occupational safety and health disciplines, and produced in collaboration with numerous stakeholder associations and organizations, these science-based recommendations include:
 - Actions first responders can take to protect themselves from exposure
 - Actions first responders can take when exposure occurs
 - Actions first responders can take when they or their partners exhibit signs of opioid intoxication

Why are *Fentanyl Safety Recommendations for First Responders* and *Fentanyl: The Real Deal* needed?

- The proliferation of illicit fentanyl, including fentanyl analogues and synthetic opioids, in the U.S. illegal drug market is having a profound impact on the health and safety of American communities and presents new challenges for first responders. When responding to scenes where the presence of fentanyl is suspected, first responders must balance safety with mobility and efficiency.

- Medical experts agree that most daily encounters involving fentanyl do not present significant health concerns to first responders when they take appropriate protective actions. Nevertheless, there is fear and misinformation regarding such concerns. This is in part driven by the increase in overdose deaths resulting from fentanyl abuse and reports of first responders describing symptoms after suspected exposure to fentanyl. However, these reported symptoms are sometimes inconsistent with opioid intoxication.
- There have also been inconsistent recommendations, including overly-cautious guidance regarding the level of personal protective equipment necessary for most daily first responder activities when the presence of fentanyl is suspected.

Who developed *Fentanyl Safety Recommendations for First Responders* and *Fentanyl: The Real Deal*?

Fentanyl Safety Recommendations for First Responders was developed by a Federal Interagency Working group coordinated by the National Security Council. Member departments and agencies included:

- U.S. Department of Justice
- U.S. Department of Health and Human Services
- U.S. Department of Transportation
- U.S. Department of Homeland Security
- Office of the Director of National Intelligence
- Office of National Drug Control Policy
- Federal Bureau of Investigation
- U.S. Drug Enforcement Administration
- National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health
- U.S. Postal Inspection Service

U.S. Customs and Border Protection, in partnership with the Federal Interagency Working Group coordinated by the National Security Council, produced the *Fentanyl: The Real Deal* video.

How were *Fentanyl Safety Recommendations for First Responders*, which the training video is based upon, developed?

The Interagency Working Group met from August to October 2017 to develop the *Fentanyl Safety Recommendations for First Responders*. The Interagency Working Group leveraged several science-based resources, including:

- [American College of Medical Toxicology and the American Academy of Clinical Toxicology](#) (published July 2017)
- [The Interagency Board](#) (published August 2017)
- [National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health](#) (updated August 2017)

Why was an Interagency Working Group needed?

Inconsistent recommendations had generated confusion in the first responder community. There was a compelling need to bring together various federal departments and agencies, as well as independent

associations and experts, to develop unified, science-based recommendations to protect first responders on the frontlines of the opioid crisis.

What was the external review process?

Once the draft *Fentanyl Safety Recommendations for First Responders* and *Fentanyl: The Real Deal* video were developed, the Federal Interagency Working Group submitted them for review to independent associations and experts representing the medical, public health, law enforcement, fire/EMS, and occupational safety and health disciplines. Their inputs ensured the resources were operationally relevant, appropriately tailored to first responders, and conveyed in a user-friendly format. The following 24 stakeholder associations and organizations were consulted:

- American College of Emergency Physicians
- American College of Medical Toxicology
- American Industrial Hygiene Association
- Association of State and Territorial Health Officials
- Association of State Criminal Investigative Agencies
- Fraternal Order of Police
- International Association of Chiefs of Police
- International Association of Fire Chiefs
- International Association of Fire Fighters
- Major Cities Chiefs Association
- Major County Sheriffs of America
- National Alliance of State Drug Enforcement Agencies
- National Association of Counties
- National Association of County and City Health Officials
- National Association of Emergency Medical Technicians
- National Association of EMS Physicians
- National Association of State EMS Officials
- National Governors Association
- National HIDTA Directors Association
- National Narcotic Officers' Associations' Coalition
- National Sheriffs' Association
- National Volunteer Fire Council
- Police Executive Research Forum
- Police Foundation

Where can I find *Fentanyl Safety Recommendations for First Responders*?

Fentanyl Safety Recommendations for First Responders can be found [here](#).

How can I watch the *Fentanyl: The Real Deal* video launch that will be livestreamed on August 30, 2018, from 2:00 to 3:30 p.m., ET?

You can watch the livestream of the video launch [here](#).