

# BUPERS/NPC SAFETY

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**At work, at play, let safety lead the way**



## Prescription Drug Abuse in the Workplace

The abuse of opioids, a group of drugs that includes heroin and prescription painkillers, has a devastating impact on public health and safety in this country. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), approximately 100 Americans died from overdose every day in 2010. Prescription drugs were involved in more than half of the 38,300 overdose deaths that year, and opioid pain relievers were involved in over 16,600 of these deaths. Drug overdose deaths even outnumbered deaths from gunshot wounds or motor vehicle crashes. On March 15, 2016, the CDC released a guideline for doctors who prescribe opioids to treat chronic pain. Many of these addictions begin in doctors' offices; enough opioids are prescribed annually to give every American a bottle of pills. Opioids are being overprescribed. 70% of people who have abused prescription painkillers reported getting them from friends and relatives. Most people don't know that sharing opioids is a felony. Science clearly demonstrates that addiction is a progressive disease of the brain that can be treated and prevented. Despite the widespread use of these medicines, there is little evidence that chronic opioid therapy is the most effective way to relieve chronic pain. The drawbacks-most notably addiction and death-are far more obvious.

In Tennessee, substance abuse admissions for prescription drugs like: hydrocodone, oxycodone, morphine, and methadone have increased 500%! In 2010, Tennessee's 1,059 recorded drug-overdose deaths added up to an estimated 7,000 years of life lost, and a loss of earnings of approximately \$238 million.

A majority of Workers' Comp Claims now involved pain meds (60-80%). Opioid abuse alone cost employers more than \$25 billion in 2007. Studies show people with addictions are far more likely to be sick or absent, or to use workers' compensation benefits. Painkiller abuse in the workplace ranges from showing up late for work, absenteeism, reduced productivity, to having withdrawal symptoms. Some workers manage to hide prescription drug abuse for years, but it does affect brain function and productivity. When working in safety-sensitive positions (ie. driving a forklift), reactions might not be as fast.

People who take opioid painkillers for too long and in doses too large are more at risk of addiction and more likely to die from drug poisoning. People think taking opioids is the best way to treat pain. But the reality is other non-addictive medicines are just as effective including many over-the counter drugs such as ibuprofen and naproxen.

## LINKS

OSHA  
<http://osha.gov/>

ESAMS  
[https://esams.cnic.navy.mil/ESAMS\\_GEN\\_2/LoginESAMS.aspx](https://esams.cnic.navy.mil/ESAMS_GEN_2/LoginESAMS.aspx)

Naval Safety Center  
<http://www.public.navy.mil/comnavsafe-cen/Pages/index.aspx>

## CONTACT US

BUPERS/NPC Safety Manager  
1-901-874-3405

BUPERS/NPC Safety & Occupational Health Specialist  
1-901-874-2331

BUPERS/NPC Safety Mailbox:  
[millbupersnpcsafetyw@navy.mil](mailto:millbupersnpcsafetyw@navy.mil)

Some types of opioid drugs include:

- \*codeine
- \*fentanyl (Fentora)
- \*hydrocodone
- \*hydrocodone/acetaminophen (Lorcet, Lortab, Vicodin)
- \*hydromorphone (Dilaudid)
- \*meperidine (Demerol)
- \*methadone (Methadose)
- \*Morphine
- \*oxycodone (OxyCotin)
- \*oxycodone and acetaminophen (Perocet)



Signs/symptoms of opioid drug abuse:

- \*Analgesia (feeling no pain)
- \*Sedation
- \*Euphoria
- \*Respiratory depression
- \*Small pupils
- \*Nausea/vomiting
- \*Itching/flushed skin
- \*Slurred speech
- \*Confusion/poor judgment



When you're on opioid pain medications, check in with your doctor regularly. Your doctor will need to know:

- how your pain is responding to the drug
- whether you're having any side effects
- whether you have any potential interactions or medical conditions that could increase your risk for side effects, such as sleep apnea or kidney problems
- whether you're taking the drug properly.

Talk with your doctor if you think you may have a problem with prescription drug use. You may feel embarrassed to talk about it-but remember that medical professionals are trained to help you, not to judge you. It's easier to tackle the problem early before it becomes an addiction and leads to more-serious problems.

Office of National Drug Control Policy (2/11/2014)  
State of TN government website  
National Safety Council  
Centers for Disease Control

**NOTE: The BUPERS/NPC Safety ESAMS Manual is now on the Sharepoint site of BUPERS Safety.**

**\*\*All ESAMS Representatives:**

**All ESAMS Representatives, excluding those at NSA MidSouth, are required to have a WESS account. All vehicle mishaps for military personnel, and civilian personnel operating government vehicles, are required to be filed in WESS and ESAMS. To apply for a WESS account:**

**<http://www.public.navy.mil/navsafecen/Pages/WESS/index.aspx>**

**UIC 66715 is required to have their own WESS account.**

1. All military and civilian personnel attached to a BUPERS UIC are required by policy, to have a valid ESAMS account. For assistance, please call 901-874-2331.
2. OPNAVINST 5100.12J requires all military personnel who operate a motorcycle on/off base to attend a COM-NAVSAFECEN approved motorcycle rider safety course. Class schedules can be found in ESAMS or at [www.navymotorcyclerrider.com](http://www.navymotorcyclerrider.com).
3. OPNAVINST 5100.12J also states that all military personnel under the age of 26 must receive an initial 4 hour traffic safety training course upon entrance into the USN. Additionally, all military personnel under the age of 26 must receive two hours of annual refresher traffic safety training. This training can be completed in ESAMS.