

Wisconsin DOJ: AG Schimel provides resource to protect law enforcement from accidental fentanyl exposure

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MADISON, Wis. – With increasing frequency, law enforcement officers are exposed to potentially-dangerous unidentified powders. Recently, a police officer in Ohio overdosed on fentanyl after brushing the substance off his uniform, and last weekend, a Winnebago County Sheriff's deputy administered Narcan® to a Menasha officer who was showing signs of a fentanyl overdose after leaving the scene of a suspected drug overdose. To assist law enforcement in quickly identifying unknown powders, Attorney General Brad Schimel has directed the Wisconsin State Crime Laboratory (WSCL) Bureau to permit law enforcement officers to perform their own field tests at the WSCL, instead of at an uncontrolled location, such as a crime scene or agency evidence storage room.

“Law enforcement officers step into the unknown at the start of every shift so we must minimize risks and whenever possible, provide certainty that can save lives,” said Attorney General Schimel. “The influx of fentanyl into our state is troubling because a small amount of the drug has the potential to cause great harm, even to unsuspecting people like law enforcement officers.”

Under the supervision of WSCL analysts, participating officers will open the unidentified powder in a fume hood; remove a sample with WSCL disposable pipettes; conduct the field test; reclose the sample in the hood; and securely double-bag the sample. The WSCL requires officers to bring a personal protective medical mask or respirator, latex gloves, protective eye goggles, packaging supplies, and field test kits. The WSCL maintains an inventory of emergency doses of Narcan® for laboratory emergencies. After law enforcement officers complete their field test, their agency may submit the sample for further testing.



Law enforcement agencies may contact the WSCL location in their service area to schedule an appointment.