

What is the hazard?

The National Survey on Drug Use and Health estimates that 7 in 10 individuals who use illicit drugs are employed either full or part time. As drug use rises, employers may have increased employee turnover, reduced productivity, increased injury rates, and tragically, drug overdose deaths at work. According to Kentucky FACE data, five employees overdosed in the workplace in Kentucky during 2017, representing 7.4% of the state's 68 workplace fatalities.

The following workplace drug overdose deaths occurred in Kentucky:

Case 1: At 8:50 am, a mason working on a construction project left the worksite and entered his personal vehicle located in a temporary employee parking lot. When coworkers searched for him, he was found in his vehicle with his head leaning against the driver side window. The employee was transported to the local hospital where he died. The cause of death was a combined (Fentanyl/Methadone) drug overdose. (2017)

Case 2: An ironworker did not return from a scheduled break that ran from 8:30-8:50 am. At approximately 11:00 am, coworkers found the employee unresponsive in a break room and he was transported to the hospital where he died. The cause of death was an acute methamphetamine overdose. (2017)

Case 3: A residential construction worker was found unresponsive by a coworker in a worksite bathroom. The employee was found with a needle and a spoon near his body. He was transported to the local hospital where he died. The cause of death was a combined (Fentanyl/Heroin) drug overdose. (2017)



Recommendations:

- Employers should train supervisors to recognize the signs of substance misuse, which include—but are not limited to—extreme mood swings, frequent absenteeism, and personality change.
- Employers that have safety-sensitive work, such as mining and construction, should consider implementing an effective workplace drug program that provides intervention services and administers employee drug testing consistent with state laws and regulations.
- Employers should consider implementing an Employee Assistance Program. This allows an employee to seek help for substance misuse and other issues.
- Employers should consider keeping Naloxone on their premises. Training on the safe administration of this life saving medication can be added to the drug-free workplace program.

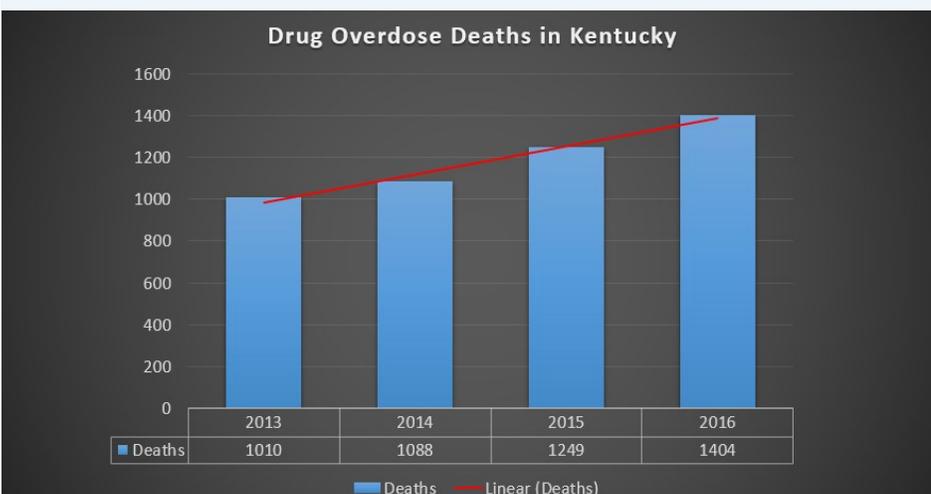


Figure 1. Drug overdose deaths that occurred in KY (residents and non-residents), 2013-2016.

Source: 2016 Overdose Fatality Report—Kentucky Office of Drug Control Policy

Kentucky Drug Overdose Fatality Facts

- In 2016, 1,338 Kentucky-resident drug overdose fatalities occurred in Kentucky.
- 90% of these overdose deaths involved opioids.
- Most frequent industries identified among drug overdose decedents in Kentucky: Construction (15.2%); Restaurants/Food Service (7.9%); Manufacturing Industries (3.6%)

Source: Drug Overdose Fatality Surveillance System (DOFSS) 2016 Annual Report

Further Resources

Name of Resource	Resource Description	Resource Link
Find Help Now KY	Website that shows substance use disorder treatment facilities with near real-time openings in Kentucky. Users can search by type of treatment facility, geographic location, and payment method.	https://www.findhelpnowky.org
Know the Signs. Save a Life	CDC infographic that covers the basics of a drug overdose, including signs to look for and what to do if someone is overdosing.	https://www.cdc.gov/drugoverdose/pdf/patients/Preventing-an-Opioid-Overdose-Tip-Card-a.pdf
Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration	Provides a drug-free workplace toolkit.	https://www.samhsa.gov/workplace/toolkit
National Drug Screening, Inc.	Provides the status of legality in Kentucky for several workplace drug testing issues.	https://www.nationaldrugscreening.com/us-state-laws/Kentucky.html

Let us know what you think about this alert! [Please click here](#) to complete our brief, anonymous survey

For additional training materials and information regarding Kentucky FACE, please visit the program website at: <http://www.mc.uky.edu/kiprc/face/index.html>

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