



Colorado Springs Police Department

Standard Operating Procedure

DL-1033-20 Overdose and Opioid Poisoning Deaths

Section 1000 – Patrol Procedures

Effective Date: 3/4/2024

Supersedes Date: 3/26/2021

.01 Purpose

The purpose of this directive is to outline procedures when responding to an overdose incident.

.02 Cross-Reference

[GO 1405 Collection and Handling of Digital Devices](#)

[DL-1840-07 Callout Criteria for the Metro Division](#)

.03 Definitions

Emergency Drug/Alcohol Overdose Event: An acute condition including, but not limited to, physical illness, coma, mania, hysteria, or death resulting from the consumption or use of a controlled substance, or of alcohol, or another substance with which a controlled substance or alcohol was combined, and that a layperson would reasonably believe to be a drug or alcohol overdose that requires medical assistance.

.04 Procedure

Reporting Incident Types

Incident Type – Overdose

Known or suspected controlled substance overdoses that do not result in a person's death will be documented using the incident type *Overdose* and will be routed to the Metro Narcotics Unit. If patrol responds to a suspected controlled substance overdose and the victim lives, please investigate thoroughly. Attempt to determine what the victim consumed, how it was consumed, how much they used, and where/whom they obtained the narcotic drug from.

Incident Type – Death of Undetermined Origin

Deaths that may have been the result of a controlled substance overdose, will be documented using the incident type *Death of Undetermined Origin*. When an officer is dispatched to an unattended death that may have been the result of a controlled substance overdose, the officer will conduct an initial investigation. If it is determined that the death may be a result of a controlled substance, refer to [DL-1840-07 Callout Criteria for the Metro Division](#) for further guidance.

Preservation of Evidence

Responding officers will preserve any evidence of controlled substance overdoses (e.g., drug administering paraphernalia, suspected narcotics, any items that may be related to the manufacture, purchase, or use of the suspected controlled, etc.). Additionally, the officer should obtain a witness statement from anyone who was with the victim or discovered the victim at the time of the suspected overdose.

Officers should also, with approval from the responding Coroner investigators, seize any phones on the person of the victim or identified as belonging to the victim. If the investigators from the coroner's office do not agree to release the phone, document the model of the phone and that it was left with the coroner's personnel.

In most overdose death investigations, the coroner's office will seize any found narcotics and drug paraphernalia. If a phone belonging to the decedent is located on the scene and is turned on, please ensure that the phone remains charged and turned on. DO NOT TURN OFF THE PHONE. If the phone is located "off," please leave it off. Refer to [GO 1405 Collection and Handling of Digital Devices](#).

Investigation Guidelines

Please refer to the Patrol Response to Overdose Death Investigations Guideline published on the Intranet.

Immunity from Prosecution

Per C.R.S § 18-1-711, a person who reports the overdose (drug or alcohol), renders aid, and assists arriving first responders is immune from prosecution. To qualify for immunity, the person must:

- Report in good faith an emergency drug or alcohol overdose event to a law enforcement officer, to the 911 system, or to a medical provider, or the person aids or seeks aid for the person who suffered the emergency drug or alcohol overdose

- The person remains at the scene of the event until a law enforcement officer, or an emergency medical responder arrives, or the person remains at the facilities of the medical provider until a law enforcement officer arrives;
- The person identifies himself or herself to, and cooperates with, the law enforcement officer, emergency medical responder, or medical provider; and
- The offense arises from the same course of events from which the emergency drug or alcohol overdose event arose.

Immunity does not and should not preclude officers from collecting evidence of the overdose (e.g., narcotics, paraphernalia, cell phones, or other indicia of narcotics manufacturing, distribution, and use).