

Death Investigation Guide

Detecting a Drug Overdose on Scene

Limbs

- ✓ Check for evidence of needle tracks, including fine needle punctures or bruising between fingers, under nails, toes, within the lines of tattoos, wrists, ankles, and backs of hands
- ✓ Check for evidence of burned fingertips or lips that may suggest smoking or drugs
- ✓ Check for transdermal patches that may indicate use of fentanyl

Head

- ✓ Check for the presence of foam cone in nose or mouth
- ✓ Check for the condition of teeth
- ✓ Check for the presence of patches or baggies in oral cavity
- ✓ Check for a perforated nasal septum

Surroundings

- ✓ Take pictures and document findings in your investigative reports!
- ✓ Check clothing for foreign objects, vials, or baggies
- ✓ Check drawers, cupboards, and medicine cabinets
- ✓ Check waste baskets and garbage bins outside
 - ✓ Look for paraphernalia such as needles, tourniquets, powders, scales, cut straws, rolled up money or broken pens
 - ✓ Count the number of pills. Record the number of prescriptions and who the prescription belongs to

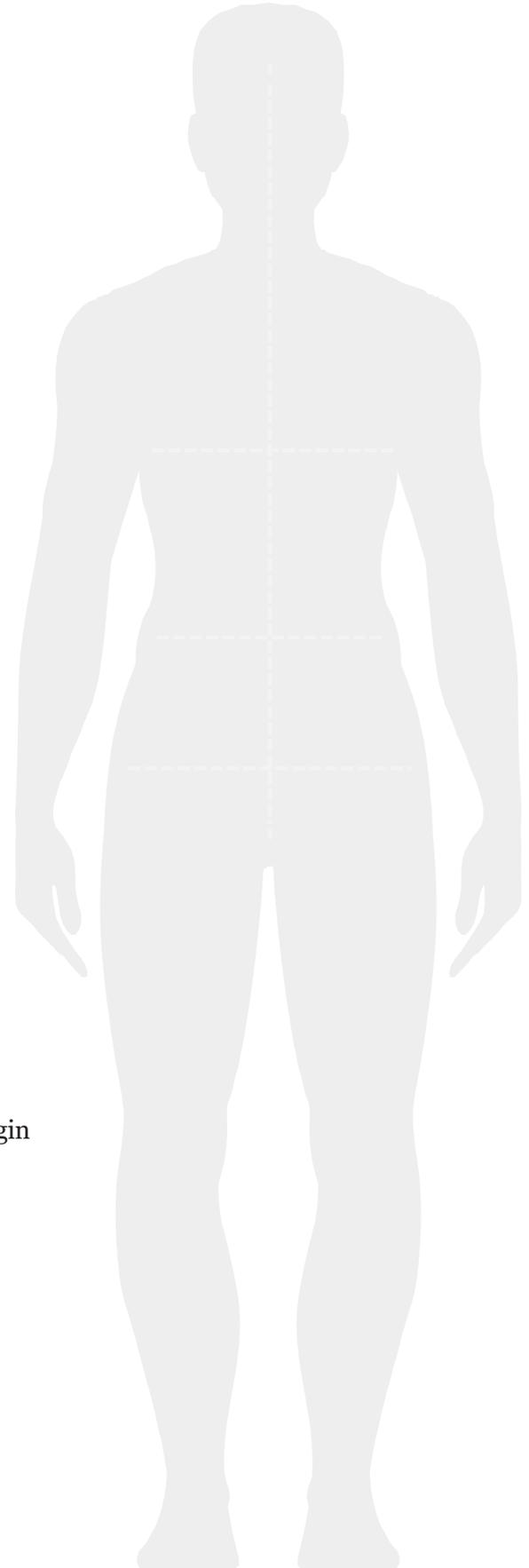
Completing the Drug Overdose Investigation off Scene

Check the PDMP

- ✓ Check the Prescription Drug Monitoring Program (PDMP) for prescribed controlled substances: <https://indiana.pmpaware.net/login>
- ✓ Record your findings in the investigation report

Collect Body Specimens

- ✓ Blood (at least 10mL)
- ✓ Urine
- ✓ Vitreous



Death Investigation Guide

Circumstantial information is important for investigators. Consider collecting the following for the decedent:

Mental Health

- ✓ Current or past treatment for mental health
- ✓ Any known mental health diagnosis
- ✓ History of suicide ideation or attempts
- ✓ Physical evidence of self harm
- ✓ Left a letter, note, text or email of intent

Medical History

- ✓ Full medical history if possible from primary care provider or psychiatrist
- ✓ Pain medications found on scene

Recent Problems

- ✓ Relationships
- ✓ School
- ✓ Alcohol
- ✓ Evictions
- ✓ Legal
- ✓ Death in family or among friends
- ✓ Physical health
- ✓ Arguments or fights
- ✓ Job or financial
- ✓ Bullying or harassment
- ✓ Homelessness

Demographics

- ✓ Age
- ✓ Marital status
- ✓ Height
- ✓ Sex of partner
- ✓ Sex
- ✓ Sexual orientation and pregnancy status
- ✓ Race
- ✓ Occupation and veteran status
- ✓ Ethnicity

Recent Institution Release

- ✓ Incarcerated (jail, prison, probation and community corrections)
- ✓ Residential treatment or recovery program
- ✓ A medical care facility such as hospital or nursing home

Childhood Trauma

- ✓ Physical abuse or neglect
- ✓ Sexual abuse or neglect
- ✓ Emotional abuse or neglect

Parental history of:

- ✓ Abuse
- ✓ Incarceration
- ✓ Separation
- ✓ Mental diagnosis
- ✓ Substance misuse

Homicide

- ✓ Previous victim of violence
- ✓ Physical fight, argument, brawl
- ✓ Stalking, prostitution
- ✓ Self-defense, bystander, random?
- ✓ Hate crime, lover's triangle

Suicide

- ✓ Did victim leave a note?
- ✓ Did victim disclose intent to someone?
- ✓ Did victim experience a recent death of family or friend?
- ✓ Did victim have any previous attempt history?

Substance Use History

- ✓ Evidence of prescription drugs such as type and name
- ✓ Evidence of injection or other route such as snorting, transdermal, smoking, or ingestion
- ✓ Evidence of illegal drugs such as powders, tar, crystal, or fake pills
- ✓ Evidence of morphine prescription
- ✓ Any bystanders present at overdose
- ✓ Any naloxone administration given by whom and how much
- ✓ Current or past substance use disorder such as opioids, alcohol, or other drug
- ✓ Last known use of substance such as days, weeks, or months
- ✓ Last known overdose such as month, years, or longer
- ✓ Recent relapse such as weeks, months, or longer
- ✓ Living with another with substance use disorder who is using

If death included a firearm

- ✓ Firearm type such as rifle, pistol, and the caliber/gauge
- ✓ Firearm make, model, and serial number
- ✓ Firearm owner
- ✓ Check if the firearm was stored and locked up loaded

