

Statement from IAED

CARFENTANIL OVERDOSE AND THE DELIVERY OF DISPATCH LIFE SUPPORT (DLS)

There has been a dramatic increase in the number of overdoses relating the use of synthetic opioids such as Fentanyl and Carfentanil. With Carfentanil, even seemingly minor exposure via inhalation or skin contact may cause collapse and respiratory arrest. It has been shown this narcotic is 10,000 times stronger than morphine. It is suggested that a dose as small as 20 micrograms (one grain of salt) can be lethal. These incidents have highlighted the potential risk these substances pose to callers, bystanders, and our responders. This increased threat has prompted the IAED to issue the following statement regarding the provision of Dispatch Life Support for incidents involving these synthetic narcotics:

The Academy always encourages its members to be aware of scene and patient safety. The Emergency Dispatcher **should be prepared to omit or discontinue** all DLS instructions involving touching the patient if:

- **The caller spontaneously provides information that suggests the presence of Carfentanil (powder or liquid) on or in the immediate area of the patient.**

Or

- **The caller questions the safety of touching the patient when a known (or suspected) synthetic opioid is present.**

The Emergency Dispatcher may discontinue treatment with a statement such as, “This could be a very dangerous situation. Do not touch the patient or disturb anything around them. Wait for the paramedics and tell me immediately if anything changes. If you feel unsafe, leave the area and take the phone with you if you can”.

As always, and as expressed by Protocol Rule, “If the complaint description involves **hazardous materials** (toxic substances) that **pose a threat** to bystanders or responders, go to **Protocol 8.**” It is not generally necessary in OVERDOSE cases, and should not be considered routine practice. However, it can be entirely appropriate if the caller provides information during Case Entry that suggests scene contamination is an imminent risk and the safety of the caller outweighs treating the patient.