

WORK to Save Lives Act

Join in Support of the Workplace Overdose Reversal Kits (WORK) to Save Lives Act

Leaders: Sen. Jeff Merkley (D-OR)
Reps. Bonnie Watson Coleman (D-NJ)
and John Rutherford (R-FL)

Overdose Prevention Initiative

Problem

Most workplaces do not stock naloxone or train staff, creating a costly, deadly and preventable gap.

Many industries with high injury rates and chronic pain see elevated overdose deaths. Workers often experience long shifts, isolated worksites, or limited health supports. Coworkers are often first in line to be able to intervene and save a life. Increasing access to opioid reversal drugs, such as FDA approved naloxone, saves lives in a crisis; safely, simply and swiftly.

Background

Naloxone works like a fire extinguisher. You keep it nearby for emergencies, and it can stop a crisis fast.

Overdose has become a leading cause of death in the workforce. In 2023, 5,283 workers died on the job, with 512 of those deaths caused by overdoses. Overdose now accounts for 10 percent of workplace fatalities; most involve opioids. Millions of people with substance use disorder face limited access to treatment and persistent stigma. Workplaces are frontline settings where overdose risk is immediate and preventable.

Solution

This bipartisan legislation equips workplaces with lifesaving naloxone when seconds matter by:

- Directing the Secretary of Labor, through OSHA, to issue nonmandatory guidance for employers on acquiring and maintaining naloxone and providing annual training.
- Requiring OSHA to issue mandatory regulations for federal agencies to stock naloxone and train employees each year.

This approach sets a national baseline for overdose readiness while supporting voluntary uptake across private workplaces.

512

overdose related workplace deaths

Source: BLS, 2023

536%

increase rate of overdose deaths since 2011

Source: NSC, 2025

1 in 11

workplace deaths as a result of an overdose

Source: NSC, 2025

Industries with some of the highest overdose death rates include:

- Construction
- Transportation
- Warehousing
- Farming
- Fishing
- Forestry

Source: CDC, 2023



Naloxone access at work protects people managing pain, people in recovery and people at risk of relapse. It strengthens safety culture and aligns with CPR and AED preparedness.

It reduces preventable deaths and connects workers to care after an overdose event. It signals that overdose response is a standard safety practice rather than a source of stigma.