

Deadly Fentanyl Pills Found on Railcar and Near Tracks

January 13, 2023

One of our fellow Class 1 railways has informed BNSF of an alarming—and potentially dangerous—trend. In several recent instances, their Operations employees have discovered quantities of pills believed to contain fentanyl on or near their railroad equipment.

These pills have been found in white tubes alongside tracks, and in one instance, a number of tubes were inserted into the hollow ribs on the side of a railcar. (See photos at right.) Authorities suspect these are evidence of smuggling operations.

Fortunately, no one has been injured. These incidents have been reported to U.S. Customs Border Protection (CBP) and Homeland Security.



While BNSF employees have not reported similar incidents, it is important that you remain alert, understand the potential danger involved, and know how best to stay safe.

What is Fentanyl?

Fentanyl is a potent synthetic opioid drug that is used for pain relief and as an anesthetic. Approximately 100 times more potent than morphine and 50 times stronger than heroin, fentanyl depresses both the central nervous system and respiratory function of people who are exposed to it. **Due to this extremely high potency, exposure to fentanyl is extremely dangerous and can be fatal.**

This substance is legally produced by the pharmaceutical industry for use in the medical field. However, illegally manufactured forms of fentanyl are increasingly being smuggled into the United States in recent years. The rise of this substance in America has been directly linked to a dramatic increase in drug overdose deaths.



Methods of Exposure:

The illegal form of fentanyl is generally produced as either a **powder** or as **pills**. In these forms, it can be absorbed into the body via **inhalation**, **skin contact**, and **oral exposure or ingestion**.

Did You Know?

As little as the tiny amount of fentanyl balanced on this pencil tip can cause a fatal overdose.



Why is fentanyl so dangerous?

Because of the extreme potency of even a tiny amount, this drug is considered a major contributor to the recent rise of accidental overdose deaths in the U.S.

Per the DEA, as little as **two milligrams** of fentanyl, which is equal to 10-15 grains of table salt, is considered a lethal dose.

BE ON GUARD—Recognize, Record and Report to ROCC

- If you see suspicious substances/objects, **DO NOT TOUCH OR ATTEMPT TO MOVE THEM.**
- Move away and immediately call the ROCC for assistance at 800-832-5452

Please note that rules and policies that are in effect at the date of issuance of this Safety Briefing are subject to change. Contact Safety/Rules to determine validity before you use the information in this briefing at a later date. Sources: www.getsmartaboutdrugs.com; www.cdc.gov; www.dea.gov