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SFPD Experiences Continued Success with Opiate Overdose Reversals

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Over the past year the San Francisco Police Department partnered with the Harm Reduction Coalition's Drug Overdose Prevention and Education (DOPE) project. The collaboration has resulted in SFPD cars being equipped with lifesaving Narcan kits. Officers have been trained on how to recognize life threatening opioid overdoses from such drugs as heroine and prescription painkillers and administer the intranasal naloxone as an antidote. In the past three months, SFPD officers have saved three persons using Narcan Kits.



The first incident occurred on Friday, March 18, 2016 at approximately 2:06 AM when several San Francisco Police officers from Mission Police Station were flagged down at 13th and Folsom Street regarding an unresponsive person. A witness informed the officers that the subject may have overdosed. The officers notified dispatchers to have paramedics respond. Several other officers arrived on scene. Officer Robby Willkom retrieved a department issued trauma kit equipped with a Naloxone (Narcan) rescue kit. Willkom determined the subject was displaying signs of an opiate overdose and administered one intranasal dose of naloxone hydrochloride to each of the subject's nostrils. As medics arrived on scene, the subject began to become responsive and was subsequently transported and treated at a local hospital.



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On Saturday, May 14th at 7:18PM two officers from Southern Station were dispatched to a gas station on the 1500 block of Harrison Street. Upon arrival, the 21 year-old male victim was located lying on the floor of the restroom. The officers saw that the man's face and fingertips were blue, identified "track marks" on his arm and upon further assessment, quickly determined that the victim was likely suffering from an opiate overdose. After radioing for an ambulance, Officer Daniel Kelly administered the Naloxone medication. After approximately ten seconds, the victim took deep labored breaths and the blue coloration gradually began to dissipate.

He was transported to St. Francis Hospital where he was later interviewed by Kelly and his partner. Through that interview, they determined that the victim had entered the gas station restroom to use heroin. The officers left the victim in stable condition, in the good hands of hospital staff.



The third incident took place at 1:03AM on Monday, May 16th. Mission Station officers responded to Clinton Park on a possible overdose call. When they arrived, they found an unconscious adult male. He was with a friend who told the officers that the victim had just injected a potent amount of heroin. The officers requested an ambulance and retrieved the Narcan Kit from their police car. The victim's lips were blue, his skin was pale and he exhibited shallow breathing. Officer Malek Jisrawi administered one dose of the Narcan and the victim awoke almost immediately. He was transported to CPMC Davies Campus for further evaluation and treatment.

Since 2015, San Francisco Police officers have responded to 7 incidents in which Narcan kits have been used to save the lives of those experiencing an overdose. The officers involved in these incidents are eligible for an appropriate commendation award. The Narcan kits have become an extremely useful tool in helping officers as first responders and in safeguarding lives. Prompt screening and assignment of 9-1-1 calls by Department of Emergency Management Dispatchers and early intervention by SFPD officers equipped with Narcan Kits combined with skilled care and transport by paramedics to an emergency room all increase the chances of survival for an overdose victim.

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