Narcotics / Fentanyl Handling and Admonishment

602.1 PACKAGING NARCOTICS

The officer seizing narcotics and dangerous drugs shall safely retain such property in his/her possession until it is properly weighed, packaged, tagged, and placed in the designated evidence locker. In some cases, a fellow investigating officer is used to weigh, package, and tag such evidence properly. This process is acceptable if the appropriate chain of custody is followed and properly documented.

Narcotics and dangerous drugs shall be packaged in a K-Pak (thick plastic packaging) of appropriate size available in the property booking area. The booking officer shall initial and date the heat-sealed K-Pak. Narcotics and dangerous drugs shall not be packaged with other property. All suspected drug evidence should be tested with TruNarc unless it is unsafe. A completed crime lab label and RIMS sticker with a TruNarc sticker shall be attached to the outside of the packaging. The chain of custody shall be recorded on the bottom of the crime lab label.

602.2 SAFE OPERATING PROCEDURES FOR HANDLING SUSPECTED FENTANYL

Due to the extreme toxicity of fentanyl in all forms, the following procedures should be followed in the handling, collection, and booking of fentanyl and other unknown substances believed to contain fentanyl or fentanyl Analogues:

a) Do NOT perform any field or presumptive testing that would cause the substance to be airborne (i.e., not packaged in a container conducive to TruNarc testing).

b) Before handling, don two pairs of nitrile gloves, eye protection, and an N95 mask

c) Do NOT open containers containing unknown substances.

d) Communicate with other first responders and emergency personnel when unknown or suspicious material(s) are present.

e) Suspected fentanyl and fentanyl analogs and other unknown substances will be packaged in double K-Pak bags of appropriate size. All heat-sealed K-Pak's should be initialed and dated. Make sure that there are no air pockets or holes in the packaging. A pencil should be able to slide across the top of the heat seal without poking through to the other side. Tug at the packaging on top to make sure the heat seal has activated the sealant and does not open the packaging (EXCEPTION: Plant material (i.e., marijuana) will mold in plastic and, therefore, should be placed in paper bags and/or envelopes.)

f) Larger items and digital devices, such as cellphones, laptops, computer drives, etc., believed to be exposed to suspected fentanyl shall be wiped down with non-alcoholic wipes and placed in double K-Paks. Appropriate PPE should be utilized while decontaminating the item. Ex-large K-Paks are located outside the Digital Forensics Room in the Criminal Investigations Bureau. Place

Copyright Lexipol, LLC 2026/03/06, All Rights Reserved.
Published with permission by San Mateo Police Department

a fentanyl sticker on the packaging to indicate suspected fentanyl present. NO envelopes, paper bags, or manilla envelopes are to be used for packaging fentanyl evidence.

g) Have K-Pak packaging prepared before handling the substance.

h) When doffing PPE, pull off the outer set of gloves before touching ANYTHING else. Once the outer gloves are off, you can remove the rest of your PPE.

i) PPE utilized during the collection of fentanyl or unknown substances shall be disposed of after use. Do NOT retain or reuse any part of the exposed PPE.

j) Packaging of fentanyl or suspect material should be done before being transported to minimize the risk of exposure.

k) Suspected fentanyl/ fentanyl analogs and unknown substances should be transported in a K-Pak, in the trunk of the patrol vehicle, or, in the case of an SUV-type patrol vehicle, in the furthest part of the compartment from officers.

l) Seized drugs and suspected drugs should be transported and booked as soon as practical into the evidence lockers at the San Mateo Police Department.

m) If fentanyl or fentanyl-related substances are suspected, it must be documented on the K-Pak with Fentanyl stickers. This includes, but is not limited to, substance(s), pills, powders, or liquids suspected of being fentanyl.

n) Personnel should not attempt to collect evidence when the following circumstances exist without proper PPE: any quantity of loose or unpackaged substance(s), pills, powders, or liquids suspected of being fentanyl. If there are large amounts of suspected fentanyl, advise a supervisor before collecting the substance.

o) Officers shall send an email to digital forensics personnel if they suspect any item of evidence has been exposed to fentanyl.

602.3 ADMONISHMENT & EVIDENCE.COM CATEGORY

For all narcotics-related arrests, the following admonishment shall be read, recorded on BWC, and documented in your police report:

Fentanyl Drug Sales/ Furnishing/Possession Admonishment:

"It is extremely dangerous and deadly to provide, distribute, furnish, or possess any drugs in any form, including real or counterfeit pills. You are hereby advised that illicit drugs, including heroin, cocaine, cocaine base, methamphetamine, MDMA ("ecstasy"), benzodiazepines and others, can be "laced" with fentanyl, a powerful synthetic opioid that can cause death, even with experienced drug users, in very tiny amounts (2mg, the equivalent of a few grains of salt). You are also advised that any counterfeit pill can now be made to look exactly like legitimate, pharmaceutical pills and these pills now can be, and often are, also laced with fentanyl. These substances alone, or mixed together, kill human beings in very small doses. If you provide a substance containing fentanyl to someone and that person dies as a result of ingesting it, you can be charged with murder."

Copyright Lexipol, LLC 2026/03/06, All Rights Reserved.
Published with permission by San Mateo Police Department

Narcotics / Fentanyl Handling and Admonishment

When logging this BWC footage into evidence.com please select "Fentanyl Admonishment" for the Category.

Copyright Lexipol, LLC 2026/03/06, All Rights Reserved.
Published with permission by San Mateo Police Department