



Oregon TITAN Fusion Center

Bulletin

Oregon Department of Justice, Criminal Justice Division



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(U//FOUO) LATEX VS. NITRILE GLOVES

Information Bulletin for Law Enforcement and First Responders

16 June 2017

022-17

(U//FOUO) This bulletin addresses the All Crimes topic of the National Intelligence Priorities Framework and addresses Oregon TITAN Fusion Center Standing Information Needs contained in OTFC-AC 2.1

(U) Scope

(U) The Oregon TITAN Fusion Center received information about an online article out of Ohio regarding the disposal of latex gloves. The open source report stated that an Ohio county coroner's office recommended the immediate disposal of all latex gloves for professionals that may come into contact with synthetic opioids during their normal course of business. Latex gloves, according to this report, may not prevent skin absorption of dangerous opioids, like fentanyl.¹

(U) Nitrile Glove Protection

(U) The Center for Disease Control (CDC) suggests using nitrile gloves instead of latex gloves; latex gloves may be an issue due to the potential for allergic reactions. CDC also recommends the use of nitrile gloves with a minimum thickness of 5 mil (0.127mm). Nitrile gloves are stronger than latex and are more resistant to punctures.

(U//FOUO) It is known that these synthetic opioids are dangerous to handle; however, local law enforcement does not know of any cases where a synthetic opioid was absorbed through a latex glove and into the skin. Rather, it is more common for exposures to occur from inadvertent inhalation and contact with *unprotected* skin.

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(U//FOUO) Some local labs have recently started phasing out the use of latex gloves in favor of nitrile gloves. Again, the preference for nitrile over latex is due to the thickness of nitrile gloves and the potential for rash-like reactions that are sometimes caused by latex-to-skin contact.

(U) The National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH) recommends wearing nitrile gloves when handling fentanyl-related or similar compounds. While the permeation of fentanyl through nitrile is unknown, nitrile gloves generally show low permeability to other hazardous drug compounds. Furthermore, “powder-free” nitrile gloves are recommended; powder particles from the glove may absorb the narcotic compounds, which could increase the potential for dermal contact/absorption during removal of the gloves and then spread to other, unintended surfaces. Additional NIOSH instructions for appropriate glove wearing include:

- Gloves should be neither too small nor too large.
 - Gloves may tear if they are too small and overly large gloves may interfere with movement.
- Gloves should be replaced every 30 to 60 minutes of use.
- Gloves should be removed when exiting a processing location.
 - New gloves should be applied when re-entering same location.
- “Double gloving” (wearing two sets of gloves) is recommended when handling fentanyl-related substances.
 - If sleeve cuffs are present, the inner gloves should be worn under the sleeves and the outer gloves should be placed over the sleeve cuff.
 - After handling the drugs, the outer gloves can be removed, but the inner gloves may be left on while labeling evidence.
 - Once the task is completed, remove the second pair of gloves and wash hands thoroughly with soap and water.
- Black gloves may actually allow the wearer to better visualize the amount of drug powder residue on the glove.
- The use of different colored gloves when “double gloving” can help expose outer glove holes and tears.

*(U) Note: The U.S. DOJ/DEA Fentanyl Guide for First Responders recommends nitrile gloves when compiling items for personal protective equipment (PPE) kits. First responders ought to maintain individual PPE kits at all times. The kit should include **nitrile** gloves, N-95 dust masks, sturdy eye protection, paper coveralls, shoe covers and naloxone injector(s). Latex gloves were not mentioned in the DEA report.*

(U) The Oregon TITAN Fusion Center (OTFC) can be reached at 1-877-620 4700 or oregonfusioncenter@doj.state.or.us.

