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EXCLUSIVE BUSINESS

# Amazon to Stock Opioid Overdose Reversal Drug Narcan at Its Warehouses

E-commerce giant is one of the biggest U.S. employers to respond to government pressure to make overdose medicine more available in the workplace

By [Sebastian Herrera](#) [Follow](#)

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Amazon's warehouse staff make up the majority of its roughly 1.5 million employees worldwide. PHOTO: BRYAN ANSELM FOR THE WALL STREET JOURNAL

[Amazon.com](https://www.amazon.com) **AMZN 3.03%** ▲ will start stockpiling opioid overdose medication across its warehouse network, making it one of the largest U.S. employers to respond to government pressure to make lifesaving drugs available in the workplace.

The retail giant said it plans to equip its North American facilities with the overdose

reversal medication naloxone, sometimes known by the brand name Narcan. The company will begin with its large fulfillment center warehouses and then supply the drugs to its delivery centers, air hubs and other facilities. Eventually, it could also stock corporate offices.

It currently has doses in some facilities in Canada, where it is already required in some workplaces.

The company said it is responding to calls by public health officials, the White House and other authorities battling [America's opioid crisis](#).

“We need to be doing something,” said Anthony Harris, Amazon’s global medical director. “The right decision for us is to provide this intervention to help deal with the epidemic.”

Nearly two-thirds of Americans older than 18 who experienced a substance use disorder in 2022 were employed, according to the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

The Biden administration has been trying to make overdose drugs more widely available and has allowed state and local health departments to use federal funding to purchase naloxone. Nonprofits such as the National Safety Council have urged employers to furnish staff with opioid overdose reversal drugs, which have become more common in public spaces such as libraries.



Regulators and other officials have sought to make it easier to obtain Narcan. PHOTO: OLIVIER DOULIERY/AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE/GETTY IMAGES

Some states have moved to require the drugs in workplaces. A California bill introduced earlier this year would mandate employers to include naloxone in first-aid kits. Employers in industries such as construction have moved to supply the medicine, and some airlines, such as Delta, carry the drug on flights.

Amazon says it is starting with its fulfillment centers because they are its most densely staffed workplaces, often with thousands of people per facility. Amazon's warehouse staff make up the majority of its roughly 1.5 million employees worldwide.

The company plans to stock at least two doses at each center and train staff on how to administer the medicine, which is delivered as a nasal spray. In an interview, National Safety Council Chief Executive Lorraine Martin said it is important for employees to be knowledgeable about lifesaving methods even when they leave work. She said Amazon's move could spur other companies to roll out similar efforts.

Amazon said it hasn't recorded opioid overdoses at its facilities, though its employees in Canada have administered naloxone as part of emergency response procedures. Like many companies, it doesn't track deaths outside of its workplaces. Amazon's Harris said that, given the national epidemic, the company assumes some people in its workforce could also be struggling with opioid addiction.

Data collected by U.S. cities indicates that most overdoses from opioids such as fentanyl happen away from work. Michael Botticelli, former director of National Drug Control Policy for the Obama administration, said companies stocking Narcan can destigmatize substance use disorder issues in workplaces.

"What that says to employees is that it significantly diminishes the stigma of how their employer views addiction," he said.

Research has linked physically demanding jobs to an increased risk of opioid overdoses. The National Institute of Environmental Health Sciences in 2023 reported that opioid

death rates among construction and extraction workers in Massachusetts were six times higher compared with all workers in the state and found similar results with other taxing jobs such as farming. Experts say such jobs can expose workers to opioids due to the injuries sustained in those fields.

Amazon this year reported that its injury rate dropped in 2023, according to Bureau of Labor Statistics data. It recorded roughly 6.5 injuries out of 200,000 working hours. The company has introduced educational programs and more automation into its facilities that it said have aided in improving injury rates.

Regulators and other officials have sought to make it easier to obtain Narcan. The Food and Drug Administration last year made it possible for the medication [to be sold over-the-counter](#). Cities and aid groups have also [stocked vending machines](#) near drug users to help prevent deaths.

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