

Safety-related employees, yardmasters, crew haulers or NS police officers

Please provide this chart to your prescribing health care provider. Ask if your prescription medication falls within one of the categories described below. If it does, follow the applicable guidance.

Prescription Medication Category / NSHS Guidance

If you are prescribed a Narcotic for treatment of opioid dependence, promptly contact NSHS for a fitness-for-duty evaluation.

Examples of narcotics used to treat opioid dependence include: Suboxone, Subutex (Buprenorphine), Naltrexone, Methadone.

If you are prescribed a Narcotic (for other than treatment of opioid dependence) or a Benzodiazepine, NSHS medication guideline prohibits use of the medication while at work and for a minimum number of hours prior to reporting for work. That minimum time period is equivalent to the dosing interval as written on the prescription label.

If you cannot meet this guideline, promptly contact NSHS for a fitness-for-duty evaluation.

Narcotics (opioids/opiates) are commonly used to treat acute and chronic pain. Other uses include cough suppression, and treatment of opioid dependence. Side effects can include drowsiness, lightheadedness and dizziness.

Examples of narcotics – Generic name (brand name): Codeine (Tylenol #3; many brand names for cough suppressants), Hydrocodone (Lortab, Norco, Vicodin, Vicoprofen, many brand names for cough suppressants), Fentanyl Transdermal System (Duragesic), Hydromorphone (Dilaudid), Meperidine (Demerol), Morphine (Avinza, Kadian), Oxycodone (OxyContin, Percocet), Oxymorphone (Opana).

Benzodiazepines are commonly used to treat anxiety. Other uses include treatment of insomnia, panic disorder and seizure disorder. Side effects may include drowsiness, dizziness and decreased alertness.

Examples of benzodiazepines – Generic name (brand name): Alprazolam (Xanax), Chlordiazepoxide (Librium), Clonazepam (Klonopin), Diazepam (Valium), Lorazepam (Ativan).

This form is a supplement to the **NSHS Medical Condition and Medication Guidance**, which is available on the medical information page on the ERC, as well as www.nscorp.com/medical.

If you have questions or concerns, please contact your NSHS Clinician or call NSHS at 800-552-2306. For answers to frequently asked questions, refer to page 2.

- 1. Which NS employees are governed by the medication guidance in the RX Med form?** This medication guidance applies to safety-related employees*, yardmasters, crew haulers and NS police officers.
- 2. I am prescribed a medication in one of the categories listed on RX Med form. I meet the NSHS medication guideline. Do I need to contact NSHS for a fitness-for-duty evaluation?** No. You do not need to contact NSHS for a fitness-for-duty evaluation, unless you do not meet the medication guidelines and/or you are prescribed a narcotic for treatment of opioid dependence.
- 3. I am prescribed a medication in one of the categories listed on RX Med form. I cannot follow the medication guideline. Will I be removed from work?** Each case is evaluated on an individual basis. A fitness-for-duty assessment will be based on your specific situation. This evaluation typically begins with a request for you to have your health care provider provide NSHS with more information about your medication, medical condition and any recommended work restrictions or accommodations.
 - If you are unable to meet the applicable medication guideline, you may be restricted by an NSHS clinician from performing your safety-related duties pending completion of the fitness-for-duty evaluation.
 - These are guidelines only. It is your responsibility to use good judgment. Do not compromise your safety at work. Do not report to work or remain at work if you feel you are unsafely impaired by your medication.
- 4. What is the dosing interval referred to in the medication guidelines?** The dosing interval refers to either the minimum time that your health care provider prescribed for you to wait between taking doses of the medication. For example, if your medication is prescribed for use every 4 to 6 hours, the minimum dosing interval is 4 hours.
- 5. Does RX Med form list all of the prescription medication that may cause unsafe impairment?** No. This form provides you with NSHS prescription medication guidance for two major medication categories. These commonly prescribed medications may cause unsafe impairment at work. This list is not all-inclusive. There are many medication categories and numerous medications not listed that also can cause unsafe impairment. This list is subject to change and will be updated periodically.
- 6. Should I change or stop the prescription medication on my own if I cannot follow NSHS medication guidelines?** No. Always follow the prescription directly as written. Never stop the medication on your own. Never change the dose or frequency of use unless advised to do so by your prescribing health care provider.
- 7. Where can I find more guidance about safe use of medication?** Talk to your prescribing health care provider. Ask your pharmacist. Contact NSHS. Educational resources about medication are also available on the ERC and www.nscorp.com/medical.
- 8. Where can I find my NSHS Clinician's direct contact information?** It is listed in the **Health Services Personnel Phone Directory** available on the ERC and www.nscorp.com/medical.

Medical information is available at www.nscorp.com/medical. It is also available on the ERC. Go to the ERC, click on Employee Self-Service. Then, click on Medical Information.

* **A safety-related employee** is any agreement or non-agreement employee who: (1) is covered under the hours of service laws; or (2) inspects, installs, constructs, repairs, or maintains track, roadbed, bridges and signal and communication systems; or (3) inspects, repairs, or maintains locomotives, passenger cars or freight cars, or other on-track equipment when such equipment is in service that constitutes a train movement; or (4) determines that an on-track roadway maintenance machine or hi-rail vehicle can be used without repair of a non-complying condition; or (5) directly instructs, mentors, inspects, or tests, as a primary duty, any person while that other person is engaged in a safety-related task; or (6) is responsible for conducting periodic tests and inspections of safety-related employees.