

# Arizona Medication Disposal Toolkit

Arizona Injury Prevention and Surveillance Program

Prepared by Alana Shacter, MPH

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This document is an overview of recent prescription drug and over-the-counter (OTC) medication disposal information and programs in Arizona for injury prevention and public safety partners, as well as reference information for hosting a medication disposal event. It is not intended to provide a complete listing of the community partnerships and drug drop-off events in the state. Visit the Medication Disposal Resources Section for information about local coalitions and events in your area.

The information presented in this document applies to medication disposal by community members. Pharmacies and medical providers are subject to state laws and should consult appropriate professional guidelines for medication disposal.

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## Medication Disposal Overview

“Medication disposal” refers to the safe, environmentally sound methods for destroying prescription or OTC medicine by individual community members.

### Why would someone get rid of medication?

- The medication is not being used or has past its expiration date.
- Keeping unnecessary medications in your possession makes them available to others who shouldn't use them.

If unnecessary or expired medications are removed from the home:

- They can't be consumed by children or pets.
- You prevent substance misuse or abuse by teens and adults.
- You minimize the risk of drug mix-ups by people in your home.

### How should a community member dispose of medication?

- Use a public “drug drop-off” or “take-back”.
  - Medication drop-offs may be one-time events, ongoing programs, or mail-in packets.
  - Refer to the Medication Drop-Off Section for more information.
  - Refer to the Local Resources Section for information on programs in your area.
- Destroy medications at home, following federal guidelines available from the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA).
  - Refer to the National and Statewide Resources Section for internet links to print materials and videos explaining how to safely dispose of medications at home.
- Donate eligible medications to a publicly available program.
  - Refer to the Prescription Drug Donation Section for more information.

### How do I organize a “Dump the Drugs” event in my community?

- Refer to the Local Resources Section to identify existing programs in your area
  - If no programs are available, contact existing programs for guidance on hosting an event
- Partner with a local law enforcement agency
  - Identify other community partners who may have an interest: hospitals, pharmacies, Poison Control Center, area schools or colleges, businesses, media, other community groups
- Select a date, time, and location for your event
  - Consider holding “Dump the Drugs” in conjunction with a health/safety fair or document-shredding event to leverage local resources
- Law enforcement partners must request permission from the DEA to collect controlled substances. Refer to the Medication Drop-Off Section for more information

## Prescription Drug Donation

Prescription drug donation or recycling refers to programs in which individuals are allowed to return selected prescription medications in sealed or single-use packaging for redistribution. Laws regarding such programs vary widely by state, and these programs may not be appropriate for individuals simply trying to dispose of excess or expired medication.

The National Conference of State Legislatures presents prescription drug return, reuse, and recycling laws by state. For more information, visit [www.ncsl.org/default.aspx?tabid=14425](http://www.ncsl.org/default.aspx?tabid=14425).

As of June 6, 2008, Arizona Revised Statute §32-1909 allows individuals to donate unused, unexpired prescription drugs. The program is the responsibility of the Arizona Pharmacy Board, and rules are available from the Arizona Secretary of State's website at [www.azsos.gov/public\\_services/Title\\_04/4-23.htm](http://www.azsos.gov/public_services/Title_04/4-23.htm). As of February, 2011, the Arizona Pharmacy Board has not published information on the Prescription Medication Repository Program on their website.

## Medication Drop-Off

Prescription drug drop-off or take-back events are a safe, legal, and convenient way to dispose of unwanted or expired medications. Medications collected at these events are destroyed, helping to prevent poisonings and drug abuse.

“Special Events” refer to events with limited times and locations for medication collection.

“Standing Drop-Off Sites” refer to locations that will accept medication for destruction on an ongoing basis.

Agencies wishing to collect controlled substances must receive approval from the United States Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA) to hold a drug drop-off event or create a standing drop-off site. Approval is requested by the law enforcement agency from the DEA’s Acting Special Agent in Charge, Douglas W. Coleman. The letter must include the following information:

- Date, time, and location of the program or event
- The law enforcement agency responsible for receiving, managing, and destroying collected medication

A sample letter is available in Appendix A: Sample Request Letter for a Medication Drop-Off Program or Event. For agencies wishing to establish a standing drop-off site, refer to Appendix B: Sample Medication Drop-Off Site Written Policy.

## Special Events

Prescription drug drop-off events have been sponsored throughout the state by various agencies since September, 2008. Prescription drug drop-off collection points have also been offered in conjunction with local health fairs, household hazardous waste collection, or document shredding events. Events may also be held in observance of Poison Prevention Week (3<sup>rd</sup> week in March) or National Prescription Drug Take Back Day (April 30, September 25)

Refer to the Local Resources section for information about agencies that may offer these events in your county.

## Standing Drop-Off Sites

As of February, 2011, the following prescription drug drop-off sites are available in Arizona on an ongoing basis. Check with individual sites to verify program conditions and hours of operation.

### Graham County

- Graham County Sheriff's Office
- Pima Police Department
- Safford Police Department
- Thatcher Police Department

*Source: Eastern Arizona Courier January 5, 2011 news article. This program is an extension of the Graham County Substance Abuse Coalition's "Dump the Drugs" campaign.*

### Navajo County

- Holbrook Police Department
- Navajo County Sheriff's Offices: locations in Holbrook and Show Low
- Pinetop-Lakeside Police Department
- Show Low Police Department
- Snowflake-Taylor Police Department
- Winslow Police Department
- Safeway: locations in Holbrook, Pinetop, Show Low, Winslow; controlled substances not accepted

*Source: Navajo County Coalition Against Drug Abuse website.*

### Pima County

- Green Valley Fire District
- Oro Valley Police Department (*coming soon*)

*Source: Personal communication with DisposeAMed Program partners.*

### Santa Cruz County

- Nogales Police Department
- Santa Cruz County Sheriff's Office

*Source: Nogales International June 18, 2010 news article. This program is a cooperative effort between the Nogales Police Department, the Santa Cruz County Sheriff's Office, and the Santa Cruz County Attorney's office. Sites active July 1, 2010.*

### Yavapai County

- Cottonwood Police Department
- Sedona Police Department
- Prescott Police Department
- Prescott Valley Police Department
- Chino Valley Police Department

*Source: MATForce Newsletter, January, 2011. Sites first reported July, 2010.*

**Yuma County**

- Yuma Police Department

*Source: Yuma Sun January 25, 2011 news article.*

## Medication Disposal Resources

### National and Statewide Resources

***U.S. Drug Enforcement Administration: National Take Back Initiative***

[http://www.deadiversion.usdoj.gov/drug\\_disposal/takeback/index.html](http://www.deadiversion.usdoj.gov/drug_disposal/takeback/index.html)

Information about National Prescription Drug Take Back Day, including a link to locate a National Take Back Day collection sites.

***U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA): Drug Disposal Information for Consumers***

[www.fda.gov/Drugs/ResourcesForYou/Consumers/BuyingUsingMedicineSafely/EnsuringSafeUseofMedicine/SafeDisposalofMedicines/default.htm](http://www.fda.gov/Drugs/ResourcesForYou/Consumers/BuyingUsingMedicineSafely/EnsuringSafeUseofMedicine/SafeDisposalofMedicines/default.htm)

Federal guidelines for the safe disposal of unused medicines by individuals.

***Arizona State Board of Pharmacy***

[www.azpharmacy.gov](http://www.azpharmacy.gov)

Provides links to flyers and video on how to properly dispose of pharmaceutical and over-the-counter (OTC) drugs.

***The Partnership for a Drug-Free America, Arizona Affiliate***

[www.drugfreeaz.org](http://www.drugfreeaz.org)

A non-profit organization providing information on drug use and abuse to teens and their parents.

***Poison Control Hotline: 1-800-222-1222***

Call for suspected or known poisonings, as well as drug identification and information. There are two Poison Control Centers serving Arizona:

Arizona Poison and Drug Information Center.

[www.pharmacy.arizona.edu/outreach/poison/?PHPSESSID=d15a2e02ba0dcf8da9875c2bf3769cc2](http://www.pharmacy.arizona.edu/outreach/poison/?PHPSESSID=d15a2e02ba0dcf8da9875c2bf3769cc2)

Banner Good Samaritan Poison and Drug Information Center.

[www.bannerhealth.com/Locations/Arizona/Banner+Good+Samaritan+Poison+and+Drug+Information+Center/\\_Banner+Poison+Control+Center.htm](http://www.bannerhealth.com/Locations/Arizona/Banner+Good+Samaritan+Poison+and+Drug+Information+Center/_Banner+Poison+Control+Center.htm)

***Safe Kids USA***

[www.safekids.org](http://www.safekids.org)

National network of coalitions working to prevent unintentional childhood injury among children younger than 14 years of age. Provides fact sheets, safety tips, and other information about preventing poisonings to families.

## Local Resources

### ***City of Mesa, Solid Waste Management Department***

[www.mesaaz.gov/waste/HHW.aspx](http://www.mesaaz.gov/waste/HHW.aspx)

The city is able to collect prescription and non-prescription drugs from Mesa residents at its Household Hazardous Waste collection events.

### ***City of Yuma Police Department Prescription Drug Collection Program***

[www.ci.yuma.az.us/22122.htm](http://www.ci.yuma.az.us/22122.htm) (928) 373-4715

A program of the City of Yuma Police Department.

### ***Dispose-A-Med Program (Pima County)***

[www.disposeamed.pima.gov](http://www.disposeamed.pima.gov) (520) 443-6040

A community coalition providing information and sponsoring drug drop-off events throughout Pima County.

### ***Flagstaff Citizens Against Substance Abuse***

[www.flagcasa.org](http://www.flagcasa.org) (928) 779-5361

Part of the Coconino County Alliance Against Drugs (CCAAD), sponsors drug drop-off events

### ***Graham Anti Meth Coalition***

[www.infoseaz.org](http://www.infoseaz.org).

Published the “Dump the Drugs Toolkit” with information for community members regarding why and how to organize a community prescription drug drop-off event.

### ***Navajo County Drug Project***

[www.navajocountydrugproject.com](http://www.navajocountydrugproject.com) (928) 368-7519

A community coalition providing information and sponsoring drug drop-off events throughout Navajo County. Website includes links to local community coalitions in Navajo County.

### ***Yavapai County Substance Abuse Coalition (MATForce)***

[www.matforce.org](http://www.matforce.org) (928) 708-0100

A community coalition providing information and sponsoring drug drop-off events and standing sites throughout Yavapai County.

## Appendix A: Sample Request Letter for a Medication Drop-Off Program or Event

Douglas W. Coleman  
Acting Special Agent in Charge  
3010 North Second Street, Suite 100  
Phoenix, Arizona 85012-3055

Dear Acting SAC Coleman;

The {law enforcement partner} is interested in operating a pharmaceutical controlled substance “take-back” program/event in conjunction with our {community program or coalition} in {community}. I understand that controlled substances may be collected at these programs only if law enforcement is present and takes immediate custody of the controlled substances and is responsible for appropriate disposal of the substances.

My proposed method for the collection of unwanted controlled substances from members of the public for the purpose of disposing of such controlled substances is as follows:

{describe your event or standing site protocol}

Based on this proposal, I am requesting approval from the Drug Enforcement Administration to operate a controlled substance “take-back” program/event. We would appreciate your consideration of this request. If you have any questions, please contact this office.

Sincerely,

{law enforcement contact}  
{contact’s title}

## Appendix B: Sample Medication Drop-Off Site Written Policy

*Note: The DEA only approves the collection and destruction of controlled substances, and does not dictate the specifics noted in the Sample Written Policy below. The Sample Written Policy below is provided as an example for individual law enforcement agencies creating their own internal medication collection procedures.*

### **DEA's conditions of approval for a controlled substance collection/destruction program:**

- A full-time law enforcement officer is to be responsible for supervising the collection
- The law enforcement officer alone must maintain control of the drugs until they are turned over for disposal. Such disposal is to be in accordance with local agency procedures for destruction of controlled substances.
- No illicitly manufactured drugs may be collected and stored with the prescription drugs. Law enforcement shall follow their standard procedure regarding illicit items.
- Destruction must comply with federal and state laws / regulations, including all applicable public health and environmental laws.

### **Sample Written Policy: Prescription Drugs – “Destruction Only” Impound**

1. Any prescription drugs which are being turned into the Police Department for the purpose of “Destruction” and which are not being impounded as evidence, shall be processed through the Property & Evidence impound procedure.
2. Any citizen requesting to turn in prescription drugs only for the purpose of destruction shall be assisted by a call taker or a property technician, Monday through Friday between 9:00 a.m. and 4:30 p.m., who will be responsible to obtain a DR number and impound the drugs labeled “Prescription Drugs for Destruction Only” with the use of a property impound sheet.
3. Citizens will be informed that the department will only take prescription drugs for voluntary destruction Monday – Friday between 9:00 a.m. and 4:30 p.m. If destruction is requested that cannot be accommodated during the designated hours, an officer may be dispatched to the call if available.
4. Prescription drugs that are turned in shall be weighed for accuracy and accountability. The weighing of the prescription drugs shall take place in front of the citizen that turned in the prescription drugs. A scale will be available for this purpose in the Records Section.
5. Prescription drugs will be removed from their containers and placed in a plastic evidence bag. These bags will be kept in supply with the scale. The empty containers will be returned to the citizen if requested, otherwise they will be discarded.
6. Prescription drugs that cannot be removed from their containers (drops, salve, inhalers) will remain in these containers and be placed in the plastic evidence bag.
7. The total weight of the plastic evidence bag containing all of the impounded prescription drugs will be recorded on the Property and Evidence Report.
8. The goldenrod copy of the completed Property and Evidence Report shall be released to the citizen that turned in the prescription drugs.
9. The prescription drugs will then be sealed and deposited into a property locker with the white copy of the Property and Evidence Report.

Additionally, per the Property and Evidence Manual: Items impounded under the Prescription Drug Disposal Program may be destroyed after 30 days.