

Frequently Asked Questions: UF Medical Amnesty Policy (MAP)

What is the purpose of the Medical Amnesty Policy?

The University of Florida is committed to promoting a safe and healthy environment for **all** students. The Medical Amnesty Policy is designed to encourage students to make responsible decisions and seek prompt, professional, medical assistance and treatment in serious or life-threatening situations that result from alcohol and/or other drug abuse such as alcohol poisoning or drug overdose. MAP seeks to diminish fear of disciplinary and conduct sanctions in such situations and to encourage individuals and organizations to seek needed medical attention for students in distress from alcohol and drug use.

How does the Medical Amnesty Policy work?

In serious or life-threatening situations, particularly where alcohol poisoning or drug overdose is suspected or where other medical treatment is reasonably believed to be appropriate, students are asked to take the following steps:

- Call 911.
- Stay with the person needing assistance until help arrives.
- Be prepared to give the emergency medical personnel as much information as possible including the amount and type of alcohol or substances consumed.

If a student is so intoxicated s/he is unable to be awakened, letting that person “sleep it off” is not a reasonable alternative to getting him/her the necessary medical help.

What happens after medical help is provided?

The following next steps outline the process after medical help is provided to students in need of medical attention as a result of alcohol and/or drug use:

1. The situation is first evaluated by the Dean of Students Office to determine if the Medical Amnesty Policy applies.
2. If the situation qualifies, students are required to meet with a staff member at the GatorWell Health Promotion Services office.
3. The staff member, after evaluating the situation, may also refer the student to a substance abuse specialist for assessment, counseling, and/or possible referral for treatment.

Students who are referred but fail to meet and complete the recommendations in their entirety may be subject to additional requirements after an opportunity to meet with a staff member from the Dean of Students Office.

Will my parents find out?

Possibly, but not necessarily. If a registered student is transported to an emergency medical treatment center for alcohol or drug use, the student’s parents or guardians may be notified by a phone call from the Dean of Students Office if necessary to protect the health or safety of the student or other individuals.

Does the Medical Amnesty Policy protect students from police or legal actions?

No. The Medical Amnesty Policy only applies to the UF Student Code of Conduct, Housing & Residence Education Community Standards, and Greek Life policies. It does not prevent or preclude police or other legal actions.

Will incidents involving the Medical Amnesty Policy be on my academic record?

No. Medical Amnesty Policy incidents will not be entered on the student's official academic record.

Does the Medical Amnesty Policy cover student groups and organizations?

If a representative of a UF student organization hosting an event calls for medical assistance, this act of responsibility might mitigate potential Student Conduct Code consequences, i.e., the fact that an organization sought help will be favorably considered in potential sanctioning for university policy violations.

UF student organizations involved in an incident must agree to take recommended steps to address concerns.

In appropriate situations as determined in the conduct process, mitigation could result in the requirement of participation in an educational program or educational activities rather than other disciplinary consequences.

What does the Medical Amnesty Policy apply to?

The Medical Amnesty Policy applies to the following situations:

- UF students who initiate and seek assistance and/or medical treatment on behalf of him- or her-self, another student, or a friend experiencing an alcohol and/or other drug related emergency.

- UF students' use of alcohol or drugs where medical attention is needed.

- UF students who are a victim of sexual assault and have also engaged in underage alcohol consumption.

What does the Medical Amnesty Policy NOT apply to?

Other prohibited behavior such as illegal distribution of illicit substances, harassment, or assault.

Is there a limit to the number of times the Medical Amnesty Policy can be used?

No. Students are always encouraged to look after their friends and peers, and are encouraged to take responsible actions anytime they are necessary.

However, if a student is involved in **repeat** alcohol and/or drug abuse incidents, the following will occur:

1. The situation will be evaluated by the Dean of Students Office and/or the Coordinator of Residential Judicial Programs to determine if the student qualifies for medical amnesty.
2. The availability of medical amnesty for students with repetitive violations will be determined on a case by case basis.
3. Situations will be handled through the regular conduct process and will be considered for sanctioning purposes if a student does not demonstrate a commitment to the recommended steps and is involved in repetitive alcohol and/or drug abuse incidents.

What other institutions have implemented a similar policy?

Several universities have created and implemented either a Medical Amnesty Policy or a Good Samaritan Policy. These institutions include but are not limited to: Cornell University, University of Toledo, University of Pennsylvania, Emory University, Tulane University, Clemson University, Rollins College, NorthWestern University, University of Georgia, University of Kansas, Ohio State University, University of Texas at Austin, and University of Virginia.

What is alcohol poisoning?

Alcohol poisoning is another term for an alcohol overdose, which may occur when individuals consume so much alcohol that their bodies can no longer process it fast enough. Alcohol poisoning and overdoses are potentially lethal; the human body simply cannot tolerate or process excessive amounts of alcohol. Too many college students have died as a result of alcohol poisoning.

What are the signs or symptoms of alcohol poisoning or overdose?

The signs or symptoms of alcohol poisoning include (not all of these need to be present):

- Confusion or stupor
- Vomiting while passed out, not waking up after vomiting, or incoherent while vomiting
- Seizures
- Breathing is slow (less than 8 breaths per minute) or irregular, with 10 seconds or more between breaths
- Weak pulse, very rapid pulse, or very slow pulse
- Cold, clammy, pale or bluish skin
- Loss of consciousness: Inability to awaken a person with loud shouting, or inability of a person to remain awake for more than 2-3 minutes or to carry on a coherent conversation when awake (semi-conscious)

*A person who has lost consciousness and cannot be awakened is in danger of dying. Help is needed immediately.

How do I help a friend who might be experiencing alcohol poisoning or overdose?

1. Call 911. Then (if you are in the residence halls) call or send someone else to notify your RA on duty, but don't leave the person alone.
2. Stay with the person until emergency help arrives.
3. Be prepared to give the emergency medical personnel as much information as possible including the amount and type of alcohol or substances consumed.

What should I NOT do when helping someone experiencing alcohol poisoning or overdose?

DO NOT: Hesitate to call 911. The person's life is in danger. Better to be safe than sorry.

DO NOT: Leave the person alone. The person may seem to be okay, but the alcohol ingested may take some time to be absorbed before peak levels are reached in the brain.

DO NOT: Try to give the person anything to eat or drink. The stomach is severely irritated and cannot handle anything else.

DO NOT: Put the person in a cold shower. The person could fall or the shock could make him/her pass out.

DO NOT: Just let him/her "sleep it off."