



# Prescription Drug Safety and Disposal

10 Points Bronze Priority Silver Priority

New Action for January 2014

This action is designed to develop a network of readily accessible pharmaceutical drop-off locations for residents that possess drugs that they no longer wish to keep. This applies to pills that may be expired or are no longer required medically. Traditionally, residents had been encouraged to flush drugs, but negative environmental impacts to waterways and sensitive receptors have been identified. Scientific studies have shown that pharmaceuticals – including antibiotics, anti-convulsants, mood stabilizers and sex hormones - are commonly found in trace amounts in drinking water supplies. Disposal within the normal residential municipal solid waste stream leads to increased contamination of landfill leachate and a rise in management costs as the leachate is routinely pumped from the landfill sumps. In rare cases, occurring in senior communities, disposal through the municipal system has led to theft of drugs from the trash with intent to sell them illegally. In addition, due to a drastic increase in the abuse of household pharmaceuticals, law enforcement is recommending swifter removal of unused medications from households, and a higher level of vigilance on safeguarding drugs from abuse. Several programs currently exist and are available to county and municipal level governments to educate the public and provide a method of disposal that both protects the environment and discourages the abuse of expired or unwanted prescription drugs. Some of these programs are the DEA National Take-Back Day, Project Medicine Drop in NJ, P2D2, Rx4Safety, and the American Medicine Chest Challenge. While permanent drop-offs exist in most County Police or Sheriff's Departments, these are not necessarily readily accessible to residents.

The action would ask the municipality to establish a permanent drop off location or conduct at least 2 drop off events a year for drugs at a location within the municipality. In addition, the municipality would have to document a campaign that educates residents on the impacts associated with improper disposal and the availability of the drop off location. Several sources exist to help municipalities develop a program that meets all regulatory requirements and provide proper disposal at little or no cost to the communities. **Completion of this priority action can earn a municipality 10 points Sustainable Jersey points toward certification.**

## Who should lead and be involved with this action?

Prescription drug safety and disposal currently is coordinated by either municipal or county government, law enforcement, or a disposal entity to ensure proper security and destruction at disposal.

## Timeframe

A collection location or event can be developed and available in a relatively short period of time. Key to a successful program, however, is an effective education campaign which highlights the dangers of improper disposal, which include fostering abuse and impacting environmental resources.

## Project Costs and Resource Needs

Completion of this action involves establishing a mechanism for drug collection which satisfies law enforcement concerns and regulations, as well as environmental considerations. Costs are related to manpower requirements, which are typically minimal, as well as efforts directed at an educational campaign.

A permanent drop off location is typically developed within a law enforcement agency where it is under 24/7 observation. This type of location, therefore, only requires attention periodically to remove and deliver the materials to a secure disposal site. Currently the Rx4Safety program allows municipalities with residential collections to dispose of it for free. Running a periodic collection event requires one or two law enforcement officers to man a collection location for its duration and then secure the material collected for disposal. Most counties in NJ have a model of how this works.

## Why is it important?

Developing a proper and accessible drug disposal program and educational campaign is the only option currently available to municipalities to prevent negative environmental and societal impacts. Traditionally, residents had been encouraged to flush drugs, but negative environmental impacts to waterways and sensitive receptors have been identified. Scientific studies have shown that pharmaceuticals – including antibiotics, anti-convulsants, mood stabilizers and sex hormones - are commonly found in trace amounts in drinking water supplies. Disposal within the normal residential municipal solid waste stream leads to increased contamination of landfill leachate and a rise in management costs as the leachate is routinely pumped from the landfill sumps. In rare cases, occurring in senior communities, disposal through the municipal system has led to theft of drugs from the trash with intent to sell them illegally. In addition, due to a drastic increase in the abuse of household pharmaceuticals, law enforcement is recommending swifter removal of unused medications from households, and a higher level of vigilance on safeguarding drugs from abuse.

This action is proposed under Waste Management because there is a gap in how to dispose of unwanted medications that may negatively impact the environment or increase the risk of abuse of expired or unwanted prescription medication. The action could also be applicable under Natural Resource Protection due to the potential impacts to the environment even if disposed of in a landfill ([http://p2d2program.net/facts\\_dep.html](http://p2d2program.net/facts_dep.html)), or as Health and Wellness since the rate of people dying from prescription drug abuse has tripled since the 1990s

(<http://www.cdc.gov/homeandrecreationalafety/rxbrief/>). However, please note that credit for this activity currently will only be awarded under this Waste Management action.

## What to do, and how to do it (“How to”)

Below we have listed the requirements for earning points for this action.

The DEA National Take-Back Day, Project Medicine Drop in NJ, P2D2, RX4Safety, and the American Medicine Chest Challenge are all existing organizations and resources available to help a municipality develop a safe and compliant program. Below we have listed the requirements for each of 2 options for creating a prescription drug safety and disposal program: Option 1: Develop and conduct two collection days per year **OR** 2). Option 2: Establish a permanent drop off location.

1. **Option 1:** Develop and conduct two collection days per year, either in conjunction with one of the partners above or on your own. Conducting a collection day involves publicizing the event and its benefits relative to the environment and drug abuse prevention. The day of the event, along with an appropriate law enforcement agency, collect the medication and be sure to have it secured by the law enforcement agency. The partners above are then available to coordinate appropriate disposal, and many times this is free of charge. The cost to municipalities is the host agency’s manpower to collect and safeguard the material, then deliver it for disposal

**OR**

1. **Option 2:** Establish a permanent drop off location at an appropriate law enforcement agency (one that is willing to participate as a partner) within the municipality. The drop off, placed in an easy to access yet secure location should be monitored by the law enforcement agency, and when full, collected medication should be delivered for appropriate disposal as described above.
  - Ensure that any collected material is disposed of in a manner that protects the public from the potential abuse of collected materials, and protects the environment from the release of the drugs.

## What to submit to get credits/points

In order to earn points, your submission must meet the following standards:

The municipality must either 1). Develop and conduct two collection days per year **OR** 2). Establish a permanent drop off location. **Documentation for either option must be from within 18 months of the June submission deadline.**

1. **Option 1:** Develop and conduct two collection days per year, either in conjunction with one of the partners above or on your own. Conducting a collection day involves publicizing the event and its benefits relative to the environment and drug abuse prevention. The day of the event, along with an appropriate law enforcement agency, collect the medication and be sure to have it secured by the law enforcement agency. The partners above are then available to coordinate appropriate disposal, and many times this is free of charge. The cost to municipalities is the host agency’s manpower to collect and safeguard the material, then deliver it for disposal.

**OR**

1. **Option 2:** Establish a permanent drop off location may be established at an appropriate law enforcement agency (one that is willing to participate as a partner) within the municipality. The drop off, placed in an easy to access yet secure location is monitored by the law enforcement agency, and when full, collected medication should be delivered for appropriate disposal as described above.
  - Ensure that any collected material is disposed of in a manner that protects the public from the potential abuse of collected materials, and protects the environment from the release of the drugs.

Submit the following documentation to verify that the action was completed to the above standards. (Log in to the password protected webpage where you submit your online application for certification to write in the text box and upload documents).

In the text box, please provide a short narrative (300 word max) to summarize what was accomplished and the general steps taken to accomplish it.

### 1. Develop and Conduct Two Collection Days per Year:

• Upload: Description and date of the collection program and copies of the educational materials utilized to make the program known, such as promotional/educational materials. For each collection event, include the number of clients served, the number of prescriptions collected, and the total weight in pounds, along with a description of the final disposal of the drugs.

- Upload: Links to national programs on **your** municipal website.
- Upload: Copy of your policy for identification/address of town drop offs and hours.
- Upload: Photo of drop off area.

**OR**

### 2. Establish a Permanent Drop-Off Location:

• Upload: Location (address and name of agency, such as police department) and hours of your permanent collection location), and copies of the educational materials utilized to make the program known including links to information about your program posted on municipal, county, or other civic websites. Report on the number of prescriptions collected **from within 18 months of the June submission deadline**, the total weight in pounds, along with a description of the final disposal of the drugs. Report, if possible, on the number of individuals served.

- Upload: Links to national programs on **your** municipal website.
- Upload: Photo of drop off area.

Documentation for either option must be from within 18 months of the June submission deadline.

**IMPORTANT NOTES:** You can upload up to six separate documents for each action. Please excerpt relevant information from large documents. Please remember that your submissions will be viewable by the public as part of your certified report.

## Spotlight: What NJ Towns are doing

### Resources

#### American Medicine Chest Challenge

<http://www.americanmedicinechest.com/>

#### Covanta Energy Rx4Safety Program

[http://files.dep.state.pa.us/publicparticipation/Office%20of%20Environmental%20Advocacy/EnvAdvocacyPortalFiles/2013/Rx4Safety\\_Promo\\_Sheet.pdf](http://files.dep.state.pa.us/publicparticipation/Office%20of%20Environmental%20Advocacy/EnvAdvocacyPortalFiles/2013/Rx4Safety_Promo_Sheet.pdf)

#### Dispose My Meds

[www.disposemymeds.com](http://www.disposemymeds.com)

#### Drug Enforcement Agency National Take Back Day [http://www.deadiversion.usdoj.gov/drug\\_disposal/takeback/index.html](http://www.deadiversion.usdoj.gov/drug_disposal/takeback/index.html)

**New Jersey Division of Consumer Affairs Project Medicine Drop** includes 27 locations across New Jersey, with one in every county. This initiative makes it easier for New Jersey residents to take an active role in the fight against prescription drug abuse. Through this initiative, the Division installs secure receptacles at law enforcement stations across New Jersey so that citizens can safely dispose of their unused prescription medications. To learn more about Project Medicine Drop, visit the NJ Division of Consumer Affairs website:

<http://www.njconsumeraffairs.gov/meddrop>

**New Jersey Prevention Network** works with Statewide Regional Substance Abuse Coalitions who have the resources to help implement this action. Regional Coalitions can help market and organize a take-back day and establish permanent drop boxes in police departments and other locations in the community. Some coalitions may have financial resources while others can provide technical assistance to municipalities in coordinating their efforts. Contact the Network by phone to find out who your contact is: 732-367-0611.

<http://www.njpn.org/networks/regional-coalition/>

#### Prescription Pill and Drug Disposal Program

<http://p2d2program.wordpress.com/>