

Medical Amnesty
Proposed Policy Statement and Purpose:

The Florida State University (FSU) supports a safe and inclusive environment that enhances academic pursuits and student success. Institutional core values of the Seminole Creed and Responsible Freedom guide our conduct and inform policy and decisions. A Medical Amnesty Policy benefits our campus by encouraging students to make responsible decisions in seeking medical attention in serious or life-threatening situations that result from alcohol and/or other drug use or abuse and in any situation where medical treatment is reasonably believed to be appropriate. This policy 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.

This policy does not grant “full immunity” to a student who acts under this policy (i.e., seeks emergency assistance on behalf of him- or herself, another student, or a friend experiencing an alcohol and/or drug related emergency) if a determination is made, independent of any information gained as a result of the call for medical attention, that Student Conduct Code charges are appropriate.

Alcohol or other drug consumption (including but not limited to: excessive consumption; consumption of a dangerous or illegal substance; or consumption by someone with sensitivity) can cause serious harm or pose a threat to life. Given these risks, students are encouraged to make responsible decisions and to seek medical attention in serious or life-threatening situations that result from alcohol and/or other drug consumption and to call 911 (or FSU Police Department at 850-644-1234, if on campus) for medical attention. Students are also encouraged to seek help for any situation where medical treatment is reasonably believed to be appropriate or when problematic use and/or abuse is an issue. If a student is incapacitated, letting that person "sleep it off" or having a friend “look after” that person are not reasonable alternatives to getting him/her the necessary medical help.

Under this policy, a student who seeks emergency assistance on behalf of him- or herself, another student, or a friend experiencing an alcohol and/or other drug related emergency will not be subject to disciplinary action under the FSU Student Code of Conduct. Although students who qualify for Medical Amnesty are exempt from the Student Conduct process, they are required to complete educational measures and pay for any incurring costs as described in the Medical Amnesty and Policy Procedures Section.

Procedure:

FSU students who receive medical attention as a result of alcohol and/or illegal drug use are eligible for Medical Amnesty and will not face formal action under the FSU Student Code of Conduct. FSU students seeking medical assistance for another person during an alcohol or other drug-related emergency while simultaneously violating a student conduct policy against alcohol or drug use or possession are also eligible. Under the policy, students are required to meet with a professional staff member in the Dean of Students Department or University Housing within five (5) class days of the incident. The staff member, after evaluating the situation, will determine appropriate educational actions for the student per the University’s Alcohol and Other Drug

policy. These educational actions are required to be completed and paid for by the student. Actions may include, but are not limited to: parental notification, an alcohol education workshop and/or meeting with an alcohol and other drug counselor and a written project. Failure to meet with an Associate Dean, Associate Director of Housing, or designee may result in a hold being placed on the student's account and/or Student Conduct Code charges for failing to comply. Students who are referred but fail to meet and complete the alcohol and/or other drug actions in their entirety may be subject to additional requirements. In addition, if a registered student is transported to an emergency medical treatment center for intoxication or drug use, the student's parents or guardians will typically be notified by a representative from the Dean of Students Department or University Housing if it is determined to be necessary to protect the health or safety of the student or other individuals.

It is the expectation of the Dean of Students Department that a student use Medical Amnesty once. If the student is involved in any subsequent (i.e., repeat) alcohol and/or drug abuse incidents, the situation will be evaluated by the Dean of Students Department or University Housing staff to determine if the student qualifies for a Medical Amnesty exemption. The availability of Medical Amnesty exemptions for students with repetitive violations will be determined on a case-by-case basis. Typically, repeated situations will be handled through the Student Conduct process and will be considered for sanctioning purposes. This subsection applies only to students receiving medical attention; students who help others seek medical assistance are not limited to one Medical Amnesty exemption.

1. The Medical Amnesty Policy applies to FSU students who initiate and seek assistance and/or medical treatment on behalf of themselves, another student, or a friend.
2. The protocol applies only to the FSU Student Code of Conduct, Housing & Residence Life Conduct and policies, Greek Life policies and RSO policies. Law enforcement agencies may act within their jurisdictions in enforcing the laws enacted by the State of Florida, the United States, or any other state or nation where jurisdiction may be invoked.
3. The Medical Amnesty Policy applies only to individuals' use of alcohol and drugs where medical attention is needed. It does not apply to other prohibited behavior such as distribution of illicit substances, property damage, harassment, or assault.
4. The Medical Amnesty does apply to FSU students who are victims of sexual assault and have also engaged in underage alcohol consumption or illegal drug use.

Medical Amnesty Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ):

What Is the Purpose of the Medical Amnesty Policy?

The Florida State University (FSU) supports a safe and inclusive environment that enhances academic pursuits and student success. Institutional core values of the Seminole Creed and Responsible Freedom guide our conduct and inform policy and decisions. A Medical Amnesty Policy benefits our campus by encouraging students to make responsible decisions in seeking medical attention in serious or life-threatening situations that result from alcohol and/or other drug abuse and in any situation where medical treatment is reasonably believed to be appropriate. This policy 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 (or FSU Police Department at 850-644-1234, if on campus).
- * 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 heavily intoxicated or is incapacitated, letting that person "sleep it off" or having a friend "look after" that person are not reasonable alternatives 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:

If the situation qualifies, students are required to meet with a professional staff in the Dean of Students Department or University Housing within five class days of the incident. The staff member, after evaluating the situation, will determine appropriate educational actions for the student per the University's Alcohol and Other Drug policy. These educational actions are required to be completed and paid for by the student. Actions may include, but are not limited to: parental notification, an alcohol education workshop and/or meeting with an alcohol and other drug counselor and a written project.

Students who fail to complete the above requirements in their entirety may be subject to additional requirements after an opportunity to meet with a staff member from the Dean of Students Department or University Housing.

If it is determined, independent of the call for assistance, that a violation or violations of the Student Conduct Code have occurred, students involved in the incident may be charged with those violations.

Will My Parents Find Out?

Typically parents are notified if the student needed medical assistance as a result of alcohol or other drug consumption. 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 Dean of Students Department or University Housing or Residence Life/Housing staff member 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 particular code violations in the FSU Student Code of Conduct, Residence Life/Housing Code and policies, and Greek Life and RSO policies. It does not prevent or preclude police or other legal actions.

Will Incidents Involving the Medical Amnesty Policy Be on My Academic or Disciplinary Record?

No. Medical Amnesty Policy incidents will not be entered on the student's official academic record and will not be listed as a disciplinary record.

What Does the Medical Amnesty Policy NOT Apply To?

Other prohibited behavior (including but not limited to: distribution of illegal substances; harassment; physical misconduct; sexual misconduct; and hazing).

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, measures will be taken to appropriately address the behavior according to the following:

1. The situation will be evaluated by the Dean of Students Department or University Housing 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 Student Conduct process and will be considered for sanctioning purposes if a student does not demonstrate a commitment to the steps recommended by the health care professional and is involved in repetitive alcohol and/or drug abuse incidents.

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 or FSU Police Department at 850-644-1234, if on campus.
2. If you are in a residence hall on campus, send someone to notify University Housing staff at the front desk in the building, but do not leave the person alone.
3. Stay with the person until emergency help arrives.
4. 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 or FSU Police Department at 850-644-1234, if on campus. 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.

* Do not put the person in a cold shower. The person could fall or the shock could make him/her pass out.

* Don't just let him or her "sleep it off" or "take care" of the person.