

2010 Survey of Law Enforcement Medicine Return Locations in King County

Summary of Survey Results

As of October 2010, six law enforcement offices in King County provide drop-off programs where citizens can return their unwanted medicines. Front desk staff and Chiefs in these offices were interviewed in October 2010 to see how these programs were working. The survey was conducted by in-person interviews, given by staff from the Local Hazardous Waste Management Program in King County.

1. When did you start the medicine return program, and is it ongoing?

The oldest King County medicine collection program is Sammamish, which started in January of 2009. The newest is Snoqualmie, which began its collection service in September of 2010. All six programs are ongoing.

2. What motivated you to participate in this medicine return program?

A civic group (Leadership Eastside) asked for a program.
The city's Mayor received requests from the community.
The city council requested the program as a response to incidents at the
local high school involving prescription drugs
A series of home burglaries that targeted prescription drugs -
most stolen drugs were expired
Starting a program "just made sense."
Awareness of prescription drug abuse at the local high school
A city firefighter lost a relative to prescription drug overdose
Desire to keep the community safe.
Trying to keep down drugs in the local high school & junior high.
Commander Slack convinced Chief Conover to participate
Why would you turn down a program like this?

3. How much time / week does your office spend dealing with this medicine return program?

Answers ranged from 15 minutes to "Less than 2 hours." The average time reported is 41 minutes. The median answer was 30 minutes.

4. How much did it cost to get the program started? What are your operational costs?

This question was asked of the sheriffs, chiefs or evidence room technicians that managed the return programs. The answers provided indicated the interviewee did not have complete information on this subject – transportation and disposal costs were not mentioned in any of the responses.

Don't know
Minimal - just labor, cardboard boxes, plastic bags
Boxes & bags
LWHMP provided bin and supplies
Provided by Snohomish County Regional Drug Task Force

5. How many citizens use the program each week?

One office doesn't monitor the number of citizens that use its bin. The other 5 offices reported a range from "1 or 2" up to "6 or 8." For those offices that responded, the average number was 3.8 citizens per week.

6. How many pounds have you collected to date? Did you participate in the DEA's National Pharmaceutical Take-Back Day?

This table summarizes the total pounds of medicines collected at each site. It includes drugs taken in by the site's regular return program, as well as the amount collected as a part of the **National Pharmaceuticals Take-Back Day** – a one-day event organized by the Drug Enforcement Administration. That event took place on Saturday, September 25th, 2010. Two sites did not participate in that event, due to their office being closed on Saturdays.

LOCATION	POUNDS COLLECTED IN REGULAR PROGRAM	MONTHS OF OPERATION	POUNDS COLLECTED PER MONTH	POUNDS COLLECTED IN 9/25/10 TAKE-BACK DAY	TOTAL POUNDS COLLECTED
North Bend	26	7	3.7	32	58
Snoqualmie	15	1	15.0	75	90
Issaquah	170*	18	9.4	160	330
Sammamish	52	21	2.5	-	52
Woodinville	105	3	35.0	-	105
Bothell	402	10	40.2	172	574
	770 lbs		AVG = 12.8 lbs/month	439 lbs	1209 lbs

* 10 boxes x estimated 17 lbs/box

7. How do you dispose of collected material?

Three offices reported that collected material was transferred to the King County Property management facility in South Seattle. Drug material managed by the facility is destroyed at the solid waste incinerator in Spokane. One office reported that its material was destroyed at an industrial incinerator. One office had disposed of all of its collected material through the Drug Enforcement Administration, as a part of the National Take Back event. The location associated with the Snohomish County program transferred its collected material to a Snohomish County evidence facility – it was eventually destroyed at the permitted solid waste incinerator in Brooks, Oregon, or through the free disposal offered as a part the September 25, 2010 take-back event.

8. What sort of data are you collecting on the program?

What kind of forms and paperwork are you using to manage the program?

Five of the reporting offices were tracking collected material by number of boxes and pounds.

The office that is part of the Snohomish County program collects:

- Citizen ZIP Code.
- Number of citizens per box
- Ziploc bags / box
- Pounds / box

9. What kind of response have you had from your citizens or community?

Been pretty good.
Article in the local paper.
People thank us.
Everybody is really positive.
Happy to get rid of it.
People were just storing it up and didn't know what to do with it.
Article in Issaquah Press
Very successful.
Very positive.
Positive comments from staff and citizens.
Absolutely positive.
Citizens are so thankful.
They say "Thank you so much."
Positive
People say we should advertise more.
Citizens are frustrated when the box is full and they can't use the program.

10. Would you (or have you) encouraged other law enforcement offices to begin medicine return service? Why or why not?

Yes, yes
Haven't but would.
Yes, at meeting of King County Sheriffs meeting
Haven't but would.
Would encourage
"People are so thankful" - Impact on the office is minimal.

11. Have there been challenges in setting up or implementing the program and how have you overcome them? Any problems operating the program?

Developing operational policies.
No operational problems
Coordinating the 2 keys to open the collection bin.
Storage space in the Evidence Room
Disposal
Staying on top of the boxes as they fill up.
Nothing
Boxes fill up quickly (Bothell is the big volume site for the Snohomish County program.)

12. Is there anything else that you would like us to know about your experience with the medicine return program?

"There's definitely a need."
It's working fine.
Know we're getting stuff from Redmond.
"It's been running smoothly - very, very easy."
"I think it's great."
Lots of medicine coming from Kirkland (27%, based on ZIP code). This was from the Bothell location.

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