



Jeffrey R. Gahler,  
Sheriff

# HARFORD COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE OPERATIONS POLICY

## Prescription Drug Disposal Program

<b>Distribution:</b>	<b>All Personnel</b>	<b>Index:</b>	<b>OPS 1613</b>
<b>Responsible Unit:</b>	<b>Police Operations Bureau</b>	<b>Rescinds:</b>	<b>OPS 1613 dated 01/11/18</b>
		<b>MD Code:</b>	<b>See References</b>

<b>Issued:</b>	<b>06/21/22</b>	<b>Reviewed</b>	<b>06/15/22</b>	<b>Next Review:</b>	<b>06/15/25</b>
----------------	-----------------	-----------------	-----------------	---------------------	-----------------

### 1. Purpose

To provide employees with guidance on proper procedures regarding the prescription drug disposal program.

### 2. Policy

The Harford County Sheriff's Office (HCSO) is committed to providing the citizens of Harford County with a safe and secure way to dispose of unwanted medication in order to reduce crime related to obtaining and abusing prescription drugs and alleviate public safety and environmental issues that can arise as a result of improper disposal.

### 3. Definitions

- A. ELIGIBLE ITEMS: prescription and over-the-counter solid medication (e.g., tablets, capsules, and patches), ointments and creams, vitamins, herbals, veterinary medications, and any medication samples.
- B. INELIGIBLE ITEMS: hydrogen peroxide, inhalers, syringes/needles, thermometers, biohazard items, aerosol cans, liquids, IV bags, bloody or infectious waste, illegal drugs (marijuana, heroin, cocaine, etc.) and bulk supplies from medical offices or facilities.

### 4. References

- A. COMAR 10.34.33: allows for the disposal of prescription drugs and medical supplies, including controlled dangerous substance as allowed by the Secure and Responsible Drug Disposal Act of 2010, 21 U.S.C. 822 (as amended).
- B. Secure and Responsible Drug Disposal Act of 2010: Authorizes the release of regulations by the Department of Justice (DOJ), Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA).

### 5. Procedures

#### A. Collection Boxes

- 1. Medication collection boxes offer the public a safe and easy way to dispose of unwanted and/or expired prescription medication and other over-the-counter medication.
- 2. Collection boxes are located at the Northern Precinct, Southern Precinct, and Headquarters (HQ).
- 3. Items which are acceptable to be placed into medication collection boxes are considered discarded property and will be subject to the procedures set forth in this policy.

4. Except during times of inspections or when the contents are being removed, collection boxes will be locked; the keys will be secured in the “KeyWatcher” system at each precinct and at HQ.
5. Each collection box container will be lined with a heavy-duty trash bag for packaging, easy retrieval and to avoid contact with the collection box contents; the bag will be removed each time the box is emptied and replaced with a new bag.
6. Each collection box will include signage advising the public what items can and cannot be deposited.

#### B. Medication Collection

1. Acceptable items which may be deposited into collection boxes include prescription and over-the-counter solid medication (e.g., tablets, capsules, and patches), ointments and creams, vitamins, herbals, veterinary medications, and any medication samples.
2. Unacceptable items include hydrogen peroxide, inhalers, syringes/needles, thermometers, biohazard items, aerosol cans, liquids, IV bags, bloody or infectious waste, illegal drugs (marijuana, heroin, cocaine, etc.) and bulk supplies from medical offices or facilities.
3. Absent any law enforcement or officer safety need, citizens depositing medication should not be questioned as to their identity or the origin of the medication.
4. Medication will not be handled by a HCSO employee prior to it being placed in the collection box, unless a disability prevents the citizen from placing it into the box; in such a case, a deputy may assist the person with placing the medication into the collection box, provided it is done in the presence of the citizen.

#### C. Emptying the Collection Box

1. The Division Commander for each precinct will assign a **supervisor** as coordinator for each respective precinct. (The **Southern** Precinct coordinator will also be responsible for the HQ building). **The coordinator will serve in this capacity for no longer than four months. In addition to the coordinator, the Division Commander will assign a deputy from each precinct to serve as the retriever of contents from within the collection boxes. The assigned deputy will also serve in this capacity for no longer than four months.**
2. Individual access to the contents of the collection box is not permitted.
3. **The coordinator will serve as a witness anytime the prescription collection box is opened, and when its contents are packaged for submission to the Property Management Unit (PMU). At no time during the collection and submission of the retrieved property should the coordinator and retrieving deputy not be together during the process (i.e., never alone with the contents).**
4. **Prior to opening the collection box, both the coordinator and retrieving deputy will activate their Body Worn Cameras (BWC) to include audio to record the event in its entirety. Recording will not be terminated until the property is properly packaged, is submitted, and secured in a property/evidence locker.**
5. The **Assigned Retriever of Contents** will:

- a. empty each drop box at least on a weekly basis. More frequent emptying may be necessary at locations that have a high-volume use of the medication drop boxes;
  - b. contact the Harford County Department of Emergency Services to obtain a report number for the incident using situation found code "G20 - No Crime/Non-enumerated";
  - c. wear protective equipment to include both nitrile gloves and a bloodborne pathogens face shield;
  - d. remove the heavy-duty trash bag from the container and place in a cardboard evidence box for disposal;
  - e. place a new heavy-duty trash bag in the medication drop box container;
  - f. not individually handle or inventory items found in the collection box;
  - g. recover and process any contraband that may be found in accordance with HCSO policy;
  - h. seal the cardboard disposal box with evidence tape and write the report number on the box;
  - i. weigh the cardboard disposal box using the scale provided at the respective precinct or HQ;
  - j. complete a Property/Evidence Record (SO-258D) with the contents being listed as one item described as "miscellaneous medication from drop box";
  - k. place the box along with the Property/Evidence Record (SO-258D) into an evidence locker at the respective location for pick up by PMU personnel; and
  - l. obtain a sufficient quantity of the approved heavy-duty trash bags and cardboard collection boxes from the HCSO Quartermaster.
6. An Incident Report in the Law Enforcement Records Management System (RMS) will be completed by the retrieving deputy. The supervisor approving the report(s) will not be the coordinator. The coordinator will also write a supplement to the original incident report. These need not be lengthy reports and will utilize verbiage similar to the below as a narrative:
- a. *Example:* On 1/1/2017, Deputy Smith emptied the drug disposal box from the Southern Precinct witnessed by Sgt. Jones. Items collected came to a combined weight of 3.3 lbs. A Property/Evidence Record (SO-258D) was completed and attached to the container and placed into evidence locker 123 for disposal. All events were recorded on Deputy Smith's BWC, and the collection box key was returned to the KeyWatcher at approximately 0227 hours.
  - b. On 01/01/2017, Sgt. Jones observed Deputy Smith empty the drug disposal box from the Southern Precinct. Items collected came to a combined weight 3.3 lbs. Deputy Smith submitted the items to evidence locker 123 for disposal. All events were recorded on both Sgt. Jones and Deputy Smith's BWC, and the collection box key was returned to the KeyWatcher at approximately 0227 hours.
7. If no items were found in the box, the retrieving deputy and coordinator will complete an incident report and supplement documenting such.

8. In the event that the coordinator and/or assigned retrieving deputy are not available, and the collection box needs to be emptied, the coordinator and retrieving deputy from the other precinct should be utilized, or a Lieutenant can assume the role of either position.

D. Disposition

1. The PMU personnel will, according to their standard procedures, transfer the sealed cardboard boxes from the respective evidence lockers to the PMU.
2. The sealed cardboard boxes will remain sealed at the PMU.
3. The sealed boxes of collected medications will be incinerated on the regularly scheduled CDS destruction dates or more often, if necessary, as determined by the PMU.

Approved  
  
JEFFREY R. GAHLER  
SHERIFF  
DATE 6/21/2022