

MEDICAL AMNESTY POLICY

The overarching priority of Emerson College with respect to alcohol and other drugs is to ensure the safety and well-being of our students. The College is committed to providing guidance so that students can learn to develop a responsible approach to social challenges, including whether to use alcohol, how to do so in moderation, and how to comply with local, state, and federal laws governing alcohol consumption.

Emerson expects students to abide by laws and College policies regarding alcohol and drug possession and consumption. For those students who choose to consume alcohol Emerson expects that they do so in moderation and thereby minimize the incidence of alcohol poisoning and alcohol-related injuries. However, the College acknowledges there may be times when students may face medical emergencies involving excessive drinking and/or drug use. In these situations students are expected to call for assistance (e.g. Resident Assistant, Public Safety, 911, etc.) when concerned for their own health or welfare, or that of another student. In order to encourage students to seek prompt and appropriate attention for alcohol or any other drug intoxication the College has instituted a “Medical Amnesty” policy.

Emerson’s Medical Amnesty policy is applicable to the

- student requesting medical assistance for oneself,
- student seeking medical assistance for another person, and
- student for whom medical assistance was sought.

Seeking medical assistance for oneself or a fellow student demonstrates responsible student behavior. When evaluating an alcohol violation the College will consider whether a student sought medical assistance for oneself or another person in need, and in most cases view the act of seeking medical assistance as good judgment and accordingly, not deserving of typical disciplinary sanctions. Thus, if it is determined that the Medical Amnesty policy applies to a given situation the concerned students will not be subject to a disciplinary fine or disciplinary probation. Parental notification and referral to meet with the Counseling Center and Wellness Educator still apply.

Please note that this policy does not excuse or protect those who repeatedly or flagrantly violate the Student Code of Conduct. If a student received Medical Amnesty for a prior incident the availability of amnesty for a subsequent incident is at the discretion of the Dean of Students or his/her designee. If other infractions are concurrent at the time of intoxication including but not limited to physical or sexual assault, distribution of illicit substances or property damage this policy does not apply.

RECOGNIZING SIGNS OF INTOXICATION/OVERDOSE

If you drink or have friends who drink it’s important to know the signs and symptoms of alcohol poisoning: It’s not necessary for all of these symptoms to be present before you seek help. Those signs followed by an asterisk may also indicate opiate or sedative/hypnotic drug overdose.

- Vomiting
- Confusion, stupor*
- Seizures*
- Slow breathing (**less than eight breaths a minute**)*
- Irregular breathing*
- Blue-tinged skin or pale skin
- Low body temperature- (feels cold & clammy to touch)*
- Unconsciousness ("passing out")*

Signs of an amphetamine overdose may include:

- Rapid heartbeat
- Increased temperature/sweating
- Behavior changes indicated by increased anxiety, delirium or psychosis

A person who is unconscious or can't be roused is at risk of dying.

SEEK ASSISTANCE

Even if you don't see the classic signs and symptoms, but suspect someone has alcohol poisoning err on the side of caution - seek immediate medical care. In an emergency, follow these suggestions:

If the person is unconscious, breathing less than eight times a minute or has repeated and uncontrolled vomiting **call 911**. Remember that even when someone is unconscious or has stopped drinking, alcohol continues to be released into the bloodstream and the level of alcohol in the body continues to rise. Never assume that a person will "sleep off" alcohol poisoning.

Don't leave an unconscious person alone. While waiting for help turn them on their side; don't try to make the person vomit. People who have alcohol poisoning have an impaired gag reflex and may choke on their own vomit or accidentally inhale (aspirate) vomit into their lungs, which could cause a fatal lung injury.

Your assistance and support in helping the College keep you and your fellow students safe is most appreciated.