

Rx DRUG TAKE-BACK DAYS vs. PERMANENT Rx DRUG DROP BOXES

WHY AGENCIES NEED BOTH

Permanent Rx drug drop boxes and Rx drug take-back days provide residents a safe and easy way to dispose of unused or expired medications.

Three Arizona law enforcement experts answer some commonly asked questions and concerns about installing permanent Rx drug drop boxes and why they believe take-back days and the permanent Rx drug drop boxes are necessary in every community.

MEET THE EXPERTS:

Commander James Edelstein

Prescott Valley Police Department (JE)

Chief Robert Devries

Kingman Police Department (RD)

Chief Joe Brugman

Safford Police Chief (JB)

Q: Is there a safety concern for the citizens who drop off the prescription drugs at the bins (robberies/assaults for their Rx medications)?

A: No, we keep our drop box in our police lobby where the citizens are safe. (JE) (JB)

We have not encountered any problems of concern. Our box is located in an outer lobby which is staffed during daytime hours and monitored via video during non-business hours. (RD)

Q: We already have two events for prescription drug drop offs a year. Isn't that enough? How do I convince my chiefs and commanders a drop box is worth the cost and effort?

A: We collect around 80% of the Rx drugs we burn through the drop box annually. The other 20% is collected during our two annual events in coordination with the DEA. Grants are available each year to purchase drop boxes, and NADDI is a good place to start. (JE)

We host two events per year. Having the box available allows for immediate disposal and removes the potential of youth obtaining the drugs from the home environment. On top of the two events, we are averaging 15-30 pounds of discarded medication a month. (RD)

We have drop off opportunities at our events, but still receive approximately 30 pounds per month in our drop boxes. We want to provide every opportunity for people to properly dispose of their medications. (JB)

Q: We already allow citizens to drop off prescription drugs at our Fire Dept. Haz Mat facility. Why do we need a box at our station?

A: It gives citizens more access to a location to dispose of Rx drugs. (JE)

Having multiple sites and easy access increases the disposal rate. (RD) (JB)

Q: How big of a hassle is it to create a new policy/procedure in the books to deal with this program?

A: Our policy is one page, available to anyone who wants it. (JE)

The creation of our policy was quick and simple. Feel free to use ours as a template. (RD)

Very little, take the verbiage from one of the many agencies already doing it. (JB)

Q: How big of a public relations task is this? Will we have to advertise that the box exists? How do we do this?

A: Our advertisement is handled by our substance abuse coalition, MATFORCE, and our Public Information Officer. Partnering with MATFORCE really helped with exposure. (JE)

I don't consider public relations a task. The drop box has been well received by our community. Pharmacists are supportive and refer patients to our box on a regular basis. They also provide a magnet highlighting the program with each prescription. Our drug task force printed several thousand posters that have been distributed throughout Kingman, Bullhead City and Lake Havasu City. We also promote the opportunity on our department web site. (RD)

Not difficult at all. I suggest that agencies partner with their drug coalition or other community groups who are likely to be eager to assist. (JB)

