Medical Amnesty FAQs

1. What is Medical Amnesty?

At Washington University, Medical Amnesty refers to the act of forgoing University discipline against a student for the presence, possession or use of alcohol if the student experiences or witnesses a medical emergency related to alcohol and contacts emergency services, such as EST.

2. What situations fall under Medical Amnesty? (What does this protocol cover?)

The Medical Amnesty and Active Bystander Protocol covers alcohol-related emergencies where a student takes appropriate safety measures by calling emergency services.

3. When would Medical Amnesty not apply to a situation? (What does this protocol not cover?)

The Medical Amnesty Protocol relates only to medical emergencies involving alcohol. Amnesty is not provided for violations of the alcohol policy that are not perceived to involve a medical emergency. For example, an underage student who is confronted by a staff member for bringing a large amount of alcohol into their residence hall would not receive amnesty under this policy.

Additionally, it does not cover other university policy violations, such as hazing, sexual violence, vandalism, or drug use/possession. If these policies are violated while under the influence of alcohol, even though a student may receive medical amnesty regarding their illegal use of alcohol if they enacted appropriate safety measures (e.g. calling EST), they would still be held accountable for these other violations and sanctioned accordingly.

Furthermore, if an individual or organization has repeatedly been seen by emergency services, it is possible that Medical Amnesty may not be extended in that situation. In order to provide the best support to an individual or organization, additional resources, sanctions, and/or referrals may be given.

4. Can you walk me through what happens when EST is called for an alcohol related medical emergency for either me or a friend?

When EST is called, a duty crew of three members arrives along with a WUPD Officer. This Officer helps with managing the incident and provides additional safety measures. EST members will conduct an assessment on the patient which includes a general history, a review of their mental status, and a measurement of their vital signs. Based on this assessment, EST will then determine if the patient can be released to a sober friend of the same gender or if a transport to the hospital is necessary.

For further information on what happens when EST is called, visit the Wash U EST webpage at http://est.wustl.edu/node/23.

5. Does Medical Amnesty cover drugs?

The Washington University Medical Amnesty Protocol does not cover drug use or possession.

6. Whom does this protocol cover?

The protocol covers all Washington University Students involved in reporting an alcohol-related emergency. This includes the patient and the individual(s) reporting the emergency.
7. Is there a limited number of times I can receive amnesty?

No there is not a set number of times one can receive medical amnesty. However, depending on the situation, different courses of action may occur in order to better support the health of the individual.

8. If I live off campus, does Medical Amnesty apply?

Yes and No. Wash U protocols do not trump local law enforcement, but they impact how the university moves forward with the incident. For example, if an incident involving alcohol occurs off campus, Clayton or U-City Police may decide to issue citations to any and all students associated to the event; however, Medical Amnesty would still apply to the student(s). This means that even though a citation may have been given by the city, as a student, you would not be held to additional student conduct sanctions by the University under medical amnesty.

9. Do I have to go to the hospital for the protocol to apply?

No. Medical Amnesty is related to any medical emergency related to alcohol intoxication. If EST or 911 is called and an EST Medic or a Paramedic report that a student does not need to go to the hospital for further evaluation, Medical Amnesty will still apply to the situation.

10. How does Medical Amnesty work within Fraternity and Sorority Life?

Organizations can also be granted Medical Amnesty when they seek assistance for a student attending their event who is in need of treatment for an alcohol-related medical emergency. Specifically, within Fraternity/Sorority Life, if a chapter seeks medical attention for a member or guest, the chapter President will have an informal, follow-up, resolution meeting with the University’s Assistant Director for Leadership and Fraternity/Sorority Life. During this follow-up meeting, the incident will be discussed and reviewed. The chapter(s) involved will receive amnesty from being sent to the Fraternity/Sorority Life Standards Board and any other student conduct sanctioning from Wash U. If the chapter is involved in repeated incidents or a pattern of incidences, they may not receive amnesty from the Fraternity/Sorority Life Standards Board and other disciplinary action may be taken.

11. How does Medical Amnesty work within Athletics?

As with many campus policies and procedures, we expect our student-athletes to follow the same protocol expected of all students. Athletics will follow and support the Medical Amnesty Protocol as it is stated at Wash U. Athletic teams may have additional rules or guidelines regarding use of alcohol, given the impact alcohol can have on the health and performance of a student-athlete during their competitive season.

12. I thought I had Medical Amnesty, why does Reslife, SHS, Greek Life, etc. want to meet with me?

This may seem confusing at first, but a wellness meeting with a university official is required in order for Medical Amnesty to apply to a situation. The wellness meeting with a university official is not meant to be punitive, but rather a chance for the student to share their story and for the university official to assess how the situation might be impacting them academically, professionally, and personally. This meeting will not be reported on an Office of Student Conduct record.
13. What does a wellness meeting look like?

Wellness meetings are tailored to the individual and the situation so they will look different for everyone. Wellness meetings are not meant to be punitive, but rather a chance for the student and the professional to process the events surrounding the alcohol-related incident. It is an opportunity to learn future harm reduction approaches in a supportive environment.

14. How does this relate to EST and patient confidentiality?

Any information EST collects and writes down on their trip sheets is confidential and covered by HIPAA. As such, this information remains within the medical community at Washington University. The University’s Alcohol and Other Drug Coordinator, who conducts regular wellness follow-up meetings, is part of the medical community. The Amnesty Protocol does not affect EST's obligation to maintain patient confidentiality and abide by HIPAA.

15. Who can I contact if I still have questions about Medical Amnesty?

- Residence Life: Molly Pierson, molly.pierson@wustl.edu 314 935-4928
- Athletics: Sara Burton, sburton@wustl.edu 314 935-5128
- Fraternity and Sorority Life: David Stetter, david.stetter@wustl.edu 314 935-5923
- Student Health Services: Amanda Hoylman, ahoylman@wustl.edu 314-935-7386