

Good Samaritan Amnesty Policy FAQs

What is the Good Samaritan Amnesty Policy?

The Good Samaritan Amnesty Policy is a special exception to MIT's alcohol and prohibited substances policies designed to encourage students and student organizations to seek medical treatment in cases of alcohol incapacitation, drug overdose, or other substance-related medical emergency by providing protection from the disciplinary consequences of alcohol- and drug-related policy violations which would otherwise occur (*see <http://handbook.mit.edu/aodsanctions> for more information*).

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In order to reduce barriers to help-seeking and reporting, this policy has recently been expanded to cover student organizations and medical emergencies involving prohibited substances. It will also now be applied to individuals who report in good faith that they witnessed or are the victim of a crime or a significant violation of MIT policy (e.g., sexual misconduct, hazing) even though they may have been under the influence of alcohol or prohibited substances at the time of the incident.

Is the Good Samaritan Amnesty Policy applied differently for the person in need of help and the person calling on their behalf?

In the case of both alcohol and prohibited substance use, the protections of the Good Samaritan Amnesty Policy apply to the student(s) receiving medical attention and to the student(s) and/or student organization(s) who call for help.

What is a prohibited substance?

MIT defines prohibited substances as illegal drugs and other illegal substances, as well as substances that are generally recognized as dangerous and detrimental to the individual and community, even though they may not be illegal (including, but not limited to, whippets, 2-C's, NBOME, research drugs, Spice, K-2, non-prescribed performance enhancing or other prescription drugs).

How do students or student organizations know when it is an emergency and who to call for help?

Signs of an alcohol or prohibited substance-related emergency can include a combination of lack of coordination, inability to stand, confusion, slurred speech, erratic behavior, slow or shallow breathing, pale or clammy skin, and/or vomiting while passed out. Sometimes it is difficult to judge whether an emergency is occurring. Students should always err on the side of caution and make the call.

Always call 617-253-1212 (or 100 on campus). This number will generate an emergency response from trained medical professionals.

What happens to my information once I call?

Whenever an emergency transport occurs, only people who have a need to know are informed, such as first responders and the Dean on Call staff. These groups are charged

with ensuring student safety and well-being, and do so while protecting student privacy.

Why do we have a Good Samaritan Amnesty Policy?

MIT has this policy because we care deeply about the health, safety, and general welfare of MIT students. The Good Samaritan Amnesty Policy seeks to reduce any barriers that students or student organizations may feel they face when considering whether or not to seek help.

The policy is also now designed to help individuals who are under the influence at the time they are the victims of or witnesses to crimes or significant MIT policy violations such as sexual misconduct or hazing. Individuals in these situations can now report the incident without fear that they will face disciplinary action for alcohol- and drug-related policy violations.

Doesn't this policy just encourage students to engage in high-risk behaviors around alcohol and drug use?

No. It means that while it is preferable for students to make responsible choices in the beginning by avoiding alcohol and drugs altogether, they must also be encouraged and empowered to make the responsible choice to get help if and when things go wrong.

What are the conditions of using the Good Samaritan Amnesty Policy?

In order to qualify for this special exception, students must be a student for whom help was summoned or a student or student organization requesting help.

Based on the specific circumstances of the incident, students or student organizations may be required to complete educational and/or counseling program(s) that provide support and connection with other community services and resources. These programs are not punitive; rather they engage student(s) and student organizations in a process of critical thinking around choices, with the goal of promoting decisions that support risk reduction and promote health and well-being.

What constitutes "educational and/or counseling program(s)"?

For individuals, the programs consist of a substance abuse assessment and supportive individualized harm reduction programs offered through the Office of Community Development and Substance Abuse. For student organizations, the education programs engage members of the organization in a review of risk management and/or harm reduction strategies to support student health and well-being. We tailor all programs individually to the students so that we provide the best support possible. More information about programs can be found at <http://studentlife.mit.edu/cdsa>.

What happens if a student or student organization doesn't engage in the educational and/or counseling programs required by the Good Samaritan Amnesty Policy?

Failure to follow-up with administrative outreach or educational/counseling recommendations may cause the student(s) or student organization(s) to be ineligible for protection from disciplinary consequences. This may result in referral to the Office of

Student Citizenship, the Institute office that responds to reports alleging a student or student group has engaged in misconduct, for review and appropriate action.

What happens if a student or student organization should seek help for an alcohol or prohibited substance overdose and fails to do so?

In instances where students or student organizations do not seek help for a student in need or do not follow through with required educational and/or counseling program(s), students or student organizations may no longer be protected by this policy and disciplinary follow-up through the Committee on Discipline (COD) may occur.

If a student has a prohibited substance-related medical emergency, but is found to be selling, manufacturing, or distributing prohibited substances, can the Good Samaritan Amnesty Policy be applied?

The sale, manufacturing, or distribution of prohibited substances is considered an egregious violation of policy, so the Good Samaritan Amnesty Policy will not apply. However, MIT students are still required to seek medical attention in these instances.

Although the Good Samaritan Amnesty Policy will not automatically preclude disciplinary action, the policy makes clear that the action of seeking medical attention will be a factor that will be considered when determining whether and to what extent disciplinary action will be pursued, as well as determining the severity of potential outcomes or sanctions.

Does the Good Samaritan Amnesty Policy extend to issues a student or student organization may face with MIT or other local police?

No. The policy only applies to disciplinary matters that originate from the MIT student conduct process. The policy does not constrain the MIT Police, or any other law enforcement agency, from conducting investigations, issuing a citation, executing an arrest, or engaging in any other law enforcement action. Students or student organizations may still be held accountable through local, state, and federal law enforcement agencies if they have violated the law.

Is there a limit to how many times a student or student organization can use the Good Samaritan Amnesty Policy?

No. There is no limit to the number of times students or student organizations can utilize the policy as long as the required educational and/or counseling program(s) are completed, although those programs may be tailored to address concerns about repeat incidents. This applies to those in need of help and those calling on their behalf.

What should a student do if they can't afford the cost of ambulance fees related to a medical transport?

Most transports happen through MIT EMS at no cost to students. There are rare occasions that a transport may happen by another medical service that has a fee associated with service or is not covered by insurance. When necessary, MIT works with students to relieve the associated financial burden.

