



THE SMITHFIELD THIN BLUE LINE

Smithfield Police
Department

Smithfield, VA

PRESCRIPTION DRUG TAKE BACK INITIATIVE

Unused prescription drugs pose a serious threat to the safety of our communities. The 2008 National Survey on Drug Use and Health estimates there are 6.2 million current non-medical users of psychotherapeutic drugs in the United States. The survey further indicates there are more Americans abusing psychotherapeutics than the number of cocaine, heroin, and hallucinogen abusers combined. Expired, unused, or unwanted controlled substances in our homes are a potential source of supply that fuel this abuse and are an unacceptable risk to the public health and safety. Prescription drugs also pose a threat to our health and environment if they are not disposed of properly. Many Americans believe the proper way to dispose of the medication is to flush it down the toilet or sink drain. Wastewater treatment plants are designed to remove conventional pollutants such as suspended solids and biodegradable organic material, but they are not designed to remove low concentrations of synthetic pollutants such as pharmaceuticals. The wastewater discharged from a treatment plant may contain small amounts of these drugs. This then ends up in the groundwater, rivers, lakes, and ocean. All of these water bodies are sources we use for drinking water.

Beyond prescription drugs, there are also risks from over the counter drugs. Teens and young adults are abusing some over the counter drugs, primarily cough and cold remedies. This type of drug abuse is a particular concern given the easy access teens have to these products. The 2006 Monitoring the Future (MTF) study found that four percent of 8th graders, five percent of 10th graders and six percent of 12th graders abused over the counter drugs in the past year.

On September 25, 2010 the DEA Richmond District Office and its local subordinate offices partnered with Virginia State Police, Smithfield Police Department, and with other local law enforcement agencies to conduct a state wide prescription drug take back day in order to reduce the amount of unused prescription drugs present in the Commonwealth of Virginia. The national take-back day provided a unified opportunity for the public to surrender expired, unwanted, or unused pharmaceutical controlled substances and other medications to law enforcement officers. This one-day event brought national focus on the issue of pharmaceutical controlled substance abuse. Smithfield Police Officers were on hand September 25th at the Smithfield Police Department and collected over 28 lbs. of unwanted or unneeded prescription and over the counter drugs.

PROPER DISPOSAL OF PRESCRIPTION DRUGS

According to the FDA's website, the proper way to dispose of prescription drugs if the take back program is not available is to

- 1) Take your prescription drugs out of their original containers.
- 2) Mix drugs with an undesirable substance, such as cat litter or used coffee grounds.
- 3) Put the mixture into a disposable container with a lid, such as an empty margarine tub, or into a sealable bag.
- 4) Conceal or remove any personal information, including Rx number, on the empty containers by covering it with black permanent marker or duct tape, or by scratching it off.
- 5) Place the sealed container with the mixture, and the empty drug container, in the trash.

COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIP

The Smithfield Police Department enjoys a good working relationship with the local community. Some of the recent activities they supported were the 4-H camp, the Kiwanis Fishing Day, and the Women's Health Fair. At the 4-H camp, an officer assisted 4-H staff with security for the 19 kids in attendance. The Kiwanis Fishing involved several officers and children fishing off the old James River Bridge in Newport News. At the Women's Health Fair, officers provided information and tips on numerous subjects including home safety and personal safety.

MADD recognizes Law Enforcement Officers

MADD honors law enforcement officers from across Virginia at eight regional Law Enforcement Awards Ceremonies. Officers are honored for their outstanding work on DUI enforcement and related prevention initiatives, education and training. The awards highlight the lifesaving work of law enforcement officers including Sobriety Checkpoints, Saturation Patrols, specialized DUI enforcement training, prevention efforts of school resource officers and DUI arrests. This year the following officer's from the Smithfield Police Department were recognized for DUI arrests: Officer Thomas Jones with 14 arrests and Officer Jared Vance with 13 arrests. This is the third consecutive year that Officer Jones and Vance have won the award. Congratulations to all of you on a job well done!

NHTSA.GOV This is a great website for both parents and kids. It has lots of information on driving and vehicle safety, to include the use of seatbelts, distracted driving, teen driving, and impaired driving. It is a website well worth checking out.