

HEROIN/OPIOID ADDICTION SAFE STATIONS

In response to the growing heroin/opioid addiction epidemic in Anne Arundel County, effective April 20th each Anne Arundel County and Annapolis City Fire Station will be a designated as a safe environment for individuals looking for assistance to start their path to recovery from heroin/opioid addiction.



At any time of day or night, an Anne Arundel County resident who is the victim of a heroin/opioid addiction decides or gathers up the courage to ask for help can go to any Anne Arundel County or Annapolis City Fire Station and speak to the personnel on duty. In close partnership with the Anne Arundel County Police and the Crisis Response Team, individuals seeking help will be assisted in obtaining the necessary detoxification resources.

Upon arrival to a designated Safe Station, the firefighters and/or paramedics will offer a medical evaluation. If the medical evaluation is desired, arrangements should be made to transport the now “patient” to the hospital for evaluation and treatment. The Crisis Response Warmline should be contacted at [REDACTED] and advised that a Safe Station patient is being transported to the hospital by EMS. The Crisis Response Team will communicate with the hospital staff to ensure a handoff from the medical facility to Crisis Response.

If the individual declines medical evaluation, the Warmline will be contacted and advised that there is a Safe Station case. Crisis Response Team will work closely with the individual in the station to determine the best resource and destination available. In some instances, the Crisis Response Team will recommend additional evaluation at the hospital; if so, then arrangements should be made to transport the now “patient” to the hospital for evaluation and treatment.

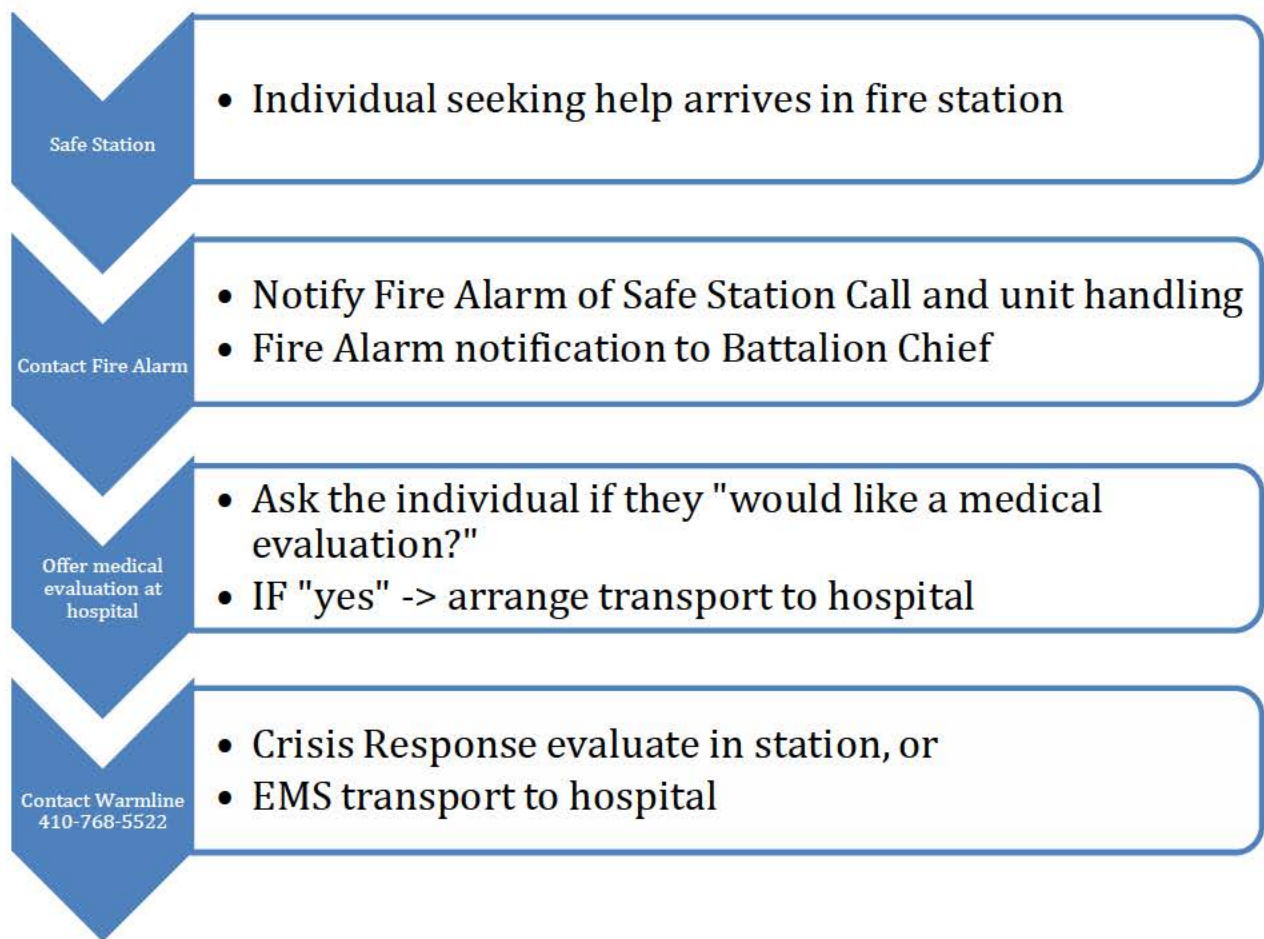
Individuals seeking assistance will be required to drop any needles and paraphernalia into a sharps collection container located at each fire station.

- If any weapons are in the individual’s possession, the appropriate police agency will be notified.

- If illegal substances are with the individual seeking assistance, the appropriate police agency will be notified for *disposal purposes only*.

The essential flow diagram is listed below. Only hospital transports will require an EMeds report. If any questions should arise during this process, the battalion chiefs and EMS supervisors will be available to assist. This program will undergo continued evaluation and modification as necessary.

Personnel with questions, suggestions or concerns about Safe Stations program may contact [REDACTED] relating to procedural issues and [REDACTED] for medical related concerns. The on duty EMS Supervisor may be contacted for guidance during a Safe Station case.



Crisis Response Warmline



For Educational Purposes Only

Signs of Opiate Withdrawal

Opiate withdrawal symptoms may range from mild to severe, depending on how dependent the individual is on an opioid drug. Dependency can be directly tied to the length of time taking a particular drug, dosage amount, which drug was taken, how the drug was taken, underlying medical conditions, the co-occurring presence of a mental health issue, and certain biological and environmental factors, such as family history of addiction, previous trauma, or highly stressful and unsupportive surroundings. Withdrawal from an opioid drug may roughly adhere to the following timeline, although it can vary from person to person.

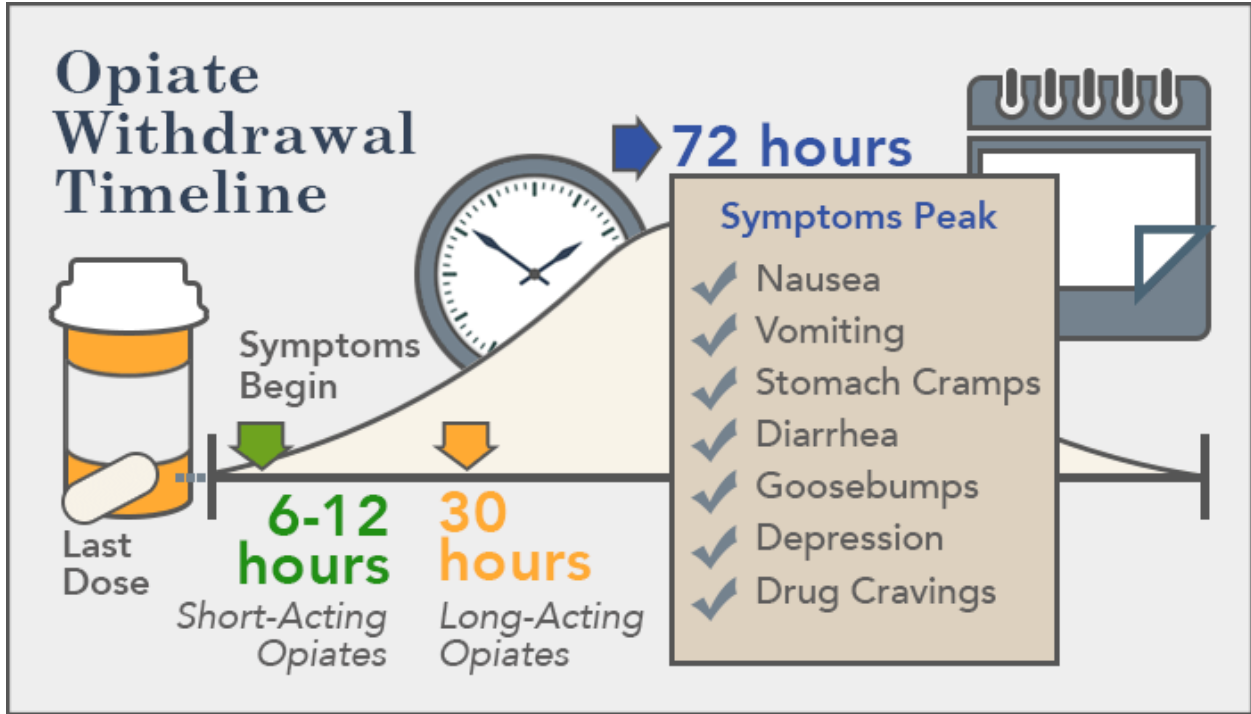
Early Withdrawal Symptoms - These usually start within 6-12 hours for short-acting opiates, and they start within 30 hours for longer-acting ones:

- Tearing up
- Muscle aches
- Agitation
- Trouble falling and staying asleep
- Excessive yawning
- Anxiety
- Nose running
- Sweats
- Racing heart
- Hypertension
- Fever

Late Withdrawal Symptoms - These peak within 72 hours and usually last a week or so:

- Nausea and vomiting
- Diarrhea
- Goosebumps
- Stomach cramps
- Depression
- Drug cravings

Some of the psychological withdrawal symptoms and cravings for opioid drugs may continue longer than a week in some cases. Therapy and psychological support provided by a mental health professional as a part of a complete substance abuse treatment program can decrease the symptoms and side effects of withdrawal.



Heroin Withdrawal Symptoms

STAGE 1 ▶
Up to 8 hours
after last dose



Drug cravings



Moodiness

STAGE 2 ▶
8 to 24 hours
after last dose



Stomach cramps



Upper body secretions



Restlessness

STAGE 3 ▶
Up to 3 days
after last dose



Diarrhea



Fever / Chills



Muscle spasms



Nausea / Vomiting



Cardiovascular problems

Source: Kosten TR, O'Connor PG. Management of drug and alcohol withdrawal. New England Journal of Medicine, 2003; 348:1786.