

## News Release

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## Clean Out Your Medicine Cabinet! Rock Island Residents Can Dispose of Home Health Waste Nov. 9 and 16

The City of Rock Island is offering free disposal of home health and medical waste on Monday, November 9 and Monday, November 16 from 9 a.m to noon.

Residents can bring expired or unused medications (liquid or pills), plus medical vials and syringes to be disposed of by the City's employee health care nurse, Robin Chenoweth. Residents utilizing this service are requested to remove prescription labels from containers. Bring your unwanted home health waste to Rock Island City Hall, 1528 3<sup>rd</sup> Avenue, from 9 a.m. to noon both days. To find the nurse's drop off station, you can go down the stairs off 16<sup>th</sup> Street to the door in the basement (not the police department), or enter through the front doors of city hall and take the elevator or stairs to the basement.

Residents must provide proof of Rock Island residence through a photo ID or official mail in order to utilize this service.

"We were initially offering this service to city employees, but at a request from Rock Island Neighborhood Partners, we decided to open the service to all city residents," said Ms. Chenoweth.

Scientists are increasingly urging Americans not to flush medications down the toilet or sink or throw them in the garbage. Waste water treatment facilities do not have the capacity to handle filtration for every type of drug, and those drugs could end up back in the public water supply. Some drugs have been known to leach into soil. Ms. Chenoweth said the drugs turned in at Rock Island will be disposed of properly, including incineration.

"A little preparation and planning can make the disposal of medical wastes safer for people and the environment," said Ms. Chenoweth.

If residents are not able to participate in the November 9 and November 16 disposal dates, then the Waste Commission of Scott County is an option.

"The Rock Island County Waste Management Agency (RICWMA) has contracted with the Waste Commission of Scott County in order to provide free Household Hazardous Material (HHM) disposal to all Rock Island County residents," said Laura Berkley, a planner with Bi-State Regional Commission. HHM includes pharmaceuticals and sharps as well as compact fluorescent light bulbs (CFL).

If a resident wishes to dispose of HHM and only has pharmaceuticals, sharps or CFLs, no appointment is necessary. Residents who want to dispose of other HHM, such as household chemicals, are required to make an appointment ahead of time. This is because the materials at the facility are hazardous in one or more ways, and safety is of the utmost concern. Making appointments ensures staff will be available to unload the HHM from the vehicle safely, and that they do not have too many citizens at one time.

Residents can take their HHM to the Waste Commission of Scott County's Landfill (11555 110<sup>th</sup> Ave, Davenport) or the Recycling Center (5640 Carey Avenue, Davenport). RICWMA has not contracted with an agency to provide a HHM drop-off site in Rock Island County. Business hours are Mondays and Tuesdays 7:30 a.m. to 3:30 p.m., and Saturdays 8 a.m. to noon. Residents should call 563.381.1300 ahead of time to make sure the facility is open.

Although the service is at no cost to residents, RICWMA is charged \$35 per household for this drop-off program. "The program is one of the more expensive disposal services RICWMA provides because of the hazardous materials training needed to handle this waste, deputizing waste staff to collect pharmaceuticals and the high cost of proper disposal with a licensed HHM facility," said Gena McCullough, planning director for Bi-State Regional Commission.

Both the Waste Commission of Scott County and RICWMA staff encourage households to make their trips worthwhile by cleaning house, so to speak, and bringing a load of HHM, pharmaceuticals, and sharps, rather than bringing just a few items. The program has utilized 52% of its budget in just three months. Countywide, 70 residents used the landfill drop-off site and 345 used the location on Carey Avenue, fiscal year to date. Rock Island residents represented 30% of the county business at the landfill and 24% at Carey Avenue.

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