

METHAMPHETAMINE LABS

NEIGHBORHOOD RESOURCE GUIDE



*Is methamphetamine cooking
in your neighborhood?*



What is methamphetamine?

Methamphetamine, CSA Schedule II, is a potent central nervous system stimulant. Meth is smoked, snorted, injected, or administered orally. Users refer to meth as "crank," "speed," "crystal" and "ice." Signs of meth use include dilated pupils, sweating, dry mouth, flushed skin and tremors. Methamphetamine users may also exhibit aggressive and psychotic behavior, irritability, anxiety, paranoia, and auditory hallucinations. There are also limitless long-term effects attributed to methamphetamine use including cardiac and neurological damage.



Why should I be concerned?

Methamphetamine users aren't the only people poisoned by this drug. Meth manufacturing is extremely dangerous and involves many common household chemical products. These chemicals, and the array of their combinations, are potentially lethal and toxic. When mixed, the household chemicals used in the manufacturing process can damage the central nervous system, liver and kidneys and burn or irritate the skin, eyes, nose and throat. The chemicals and fumes that permeate the walls, carpets, plaster and wood in meth labs, as well as the surrounding soil, are known to cause cancer, short-term and permanent brain damage and immune and respiratory system problems.

Methamphetamine trafficking and production is dangerous, not only to the user, but to those around the production site. The reckless practices by untrained clandestine meth lab operators can result in explosions and fires that could injure and kill not only the lab operator and associates, but also innocent bystanders, neighbors, law enforcement officers and firemen who come in contact with a lab. In addition to the dangers of meth labs, violence between drug dealers adds to the overall threat to any neighborhood or community.

Some meth lab operators experiment with other chemical mixtures, producing unknown toxic and hazardous chemical waste and fumes that also may cause the deaths of many innocent people.

Environmental Hazard

Environmental damage is another consequence of clandestine meth labs. Meth lab "cooks" leave approximately six pounds of hazardous toxic waste for each pound of methamphetamine produced. Lab operators often pour leftover chemicals and by-products down household drains, wells, storm drains, or directly onto the ground. Solvents and other toxic chemicals used in the methamphetamine manufacturing process pose long-term hazards because they remain in the soil and groundwater for years. Clean-up costs are extremely high because contaminated soil, buildings and other materials must be removed and incinerated.

Potential Health Effects

<i>Types</i>	<i>Common Chemicals</i>	<i>Symptoms/Health Effects</i>
solvents	acetone, ether/ starter fluid, Freon, hexane, methanol, toluene, white gas, xylene	irritation to skin, eyes, nose and throat; headache; dizziness; depression; nausea; vomiting; visual disturbance; cancer
corrosives/ irritants (acids/bases)	anhydrous ammonia, iodine crystals, hydrochloric acid (<i>muratic acid</i>), phosphine, sodium hydroxide (<i>lye</i>), sulfuric acid (<i>drain cleaner</i>)	cough; eye, skin and respiratory irritation; burns and inflammation; gastrointestinal disturbances; thirst; chest tightness; muscle pain; dizziness; convulsions
metals/ salts	iodine, lithium metal, red phosphorus, yellow phosphorus, sodium metal	eye, skin, nose and respiratory irritation; chest tightness; headache; stomach pain; birth defects; jaundice; kidney damage

What are some other costs to society?

- * Death, injury and illness resulting from meth use and the manufacturing of methamphetamine.
- * Property damage from fires and explosions.
- * Contaminated buildings and poisoned soil, water and air from toxic elements and by-products.
- * Increased federal, state and local spending (*taxpayer dollars*) for additional law enforcement and social services.
- * Increased medical costs and emergency room use for meth users.
- * In addition to the crimes committed by making, selling and using meth, the drug contributes to domestic violence, child abuse, automobile accidents and the spread of infectious diseases (*meth is typically injected*).

What can I do?

There are actions that you as a private citizen can take to ensure methamphetamine manufacturing is not occurring in your neighborhood. Drug dealers and methamphetamine manufacturers have common habits which are easily observed. Listed below are some of these common habits. **If you observe any combination of these activities, report your concerns to your local police or sheriff's department immediately.** Do not confront your neighbor with your suspicions or enter a suspected lab.



Signs of a meth lab:

Any single activity may or may not be sole proof that drug dealing or methamphetamine manufacturing is occurring. However, a combination of the following may be reason for concern.

- * Frequent visitors at all times of the day or night.
- * Activity at the house is usually at odd hours or late at night.
- * Occupants appear unemployed, yet seem to have plenty of money and pay bills with cash.
- * Occupants are unfriendly, appear secretive about activities.
- * Occupants watch cars suspiciously when they pass by.
- * Occupants display a paranoid or odd behavior.
- * Extensive security at the home or signs that indicate "PRIVATE PROPERTY" OR "BEWARE OF DOG", fences, large shrubs, bushes and trees.
- * Windows blackened or curtains always drawn.
- * Occupants go outside the house to smoke cigarettes.
- * Chemical odors coming from the house, garbage or detached buildings.
- * Garbage contains numerous bottles, containers, and materials such as those displayed in this brochure.
- * Coffee filters, bed sheets or other material stained from filtering red phosphorus or other chemicals.
- * Occupant sets his garbage for pick up in another neighbor's collection area.
- * Evidence of chemical or waste dumping (*i.e. burn pits, or "dead spots" in the yard*).
- * What have others in your neighborhood observed?

Tips for property managers

The means necessary to prevent a tenant from starting a methamphetamine lab can be simple and non-intrusive. A landlord can eliminate the likelihood of a meth lab on their property by simply screening prospective tenants and conducting regular inspections.

Meth labs require equipment and supplies that could make a "quick clean-up" unlikely. Landlords should make "surprise" or unannounced inspection of their property within the provisions of law. If a landlord suspects or discovers a meth lab, he/she should not confront the tenant or enter the lab, but contact their local law enforcement agency immediately as they are equipped to conduct an investigation and collect evidence in a safe and lawful manner.

Get to know your neighbors: Introduce yourself to the neighbors and let them know your property is a rental. Ask neighbors to keep watch on your property and provide them with your telephone number so they can contact you if they have any concerns.

Screen prospective tenants: Check the credit history and references of all prospective tenants. Have each prospective tenant provide you with a written authorization to check with the local police for prior criminal record. Advise that you check your property regularly and have your tenant sign an agreement to allow for unannounced inspections. Let your tenant know you have regular contact with the neighbors. Confirm the number and names of the tenants who will be residing at your property and find out who will be paying the bills. Keep a record of your tenant's vehicles and license plate numbers.

Absentee/Offshore Landlords

Have an agent, friend or relative check the property on your behalf.

Hotel Owners/Operators

Front desk/office staff: Be alert for guests who pay with cash; have several pieces of luggage or cardboard/rubber storage containers; have no identification, no credit card, report no vehicle (*or provide inaccurate vehicle license information*); appear covert, paranoid, suspicious, nervous and hurried; may have hands with burn scars, discolored teeth, and clothes unkempt.

Housekeeping: Be alert for chemical odors in guest rooms or the strong scent of an aerosol air freshener used to mask the odor of a meth lab; suspicious stains on carpet or drain area of tub, toilet or sink; discarded coffee filters or cloth with unknown stain or sludge residue; suspicious containers left for disposal; guest declines housekeeping services; guest appears nervous, suspicious or paranoid.



CHEMICALS

- Alcohol (Isopropyl or rubbing) ♦ Toluene (brake cleaner)
- Ether (engine starter) ♦ Sulfuric Acid (drain cleaner) ♦ Red Phosphorus (matches/road flares) ♦ Salt (table/rock)
- Iodine (teat dip or flakes/crystal) ♦ Lithium (batteries)
- Trichloroethane (gun scrubber) ♦ MSM (cutting agent)
- Sodium Metal ♦ Methanol/Alcohol (gasoline additives)
- Muriatic Acid ♦ Anhydrous Ammonia (farm fertilizer)
- Sodium Hydroxide (lye) ♦ Pseudoephedrine/Ephedrine (cold tablets) ♦ Acetone ♦ Kitty Litter ♦ Ammonium Sulphate Fertilizer ♦ Liquid Propane ♦ Dry Ice ♦ Drierite



EQUIPMENT

Pyrex or Corning dishes ◊ Jugs/bottles ◊ Paper towels
 Coffee filters ◊ Thermometer ◊ Cheesecloth ◊ Funnels
 Blenders ◊ Rubber tubing/gloves ◊ Pails/buckets ◊ Gas cans
 Tape/clamps ◊ Internet documents/notes
 Strainers ◊ Aluminum foil ◊ Propane cylinders ◊ "How To Make Methamphetamine" books
 Hotplates
 Plastic storage containers/ice chests ◊ Measuring cups
 Scales ◊ Towels/bed sheets ◊ Laboratory beakers/glassware ◊ Mop pail



Every pound of methamphetamine produced or attempted leaves behind approximately six pounds of toxic waste.



Meth lab clean-up requires a specially trained team. Clean-up can cost anywhere from \$3100 to \$150,000 per lab site. In cases where an entire building has to be dismantled, costs may exceed \$150,000.



Fires are a common occurrence with meth labs.

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