Clandestine Drug Labs

When responding to a potential active drug lab, a drug overdose, a drug exposure or drug lab dump ensure law enforcement is informed and present at scene. Many of the same chemicals used to make illegal narcotics are used to make illegal explosives. The chemical list is extensive and many of the chemicals can be extremely hazardous! To properly identify what kind of lab you are dealing with you will need to identify the precursors at scene. Also, each lab process will have specific byproducts produced as waste and or gases.

Common indicators that an illegal lab is present include:

* Glassware associated with science labs like flasks, beakers, condensers, etc.
* Chemical odors like ether, solvents, ammonia, or a metallic taste in your mouth.
* Vacuum pumps
* Plastic, rubber tubing, or garden hoses going in through windows.
* Chemical containers of various sizes. Especially solvents.
* Heat sources like mantles, hot plates, and industrial size pressure cookers with modifications.
* Unusual or extensive drainage or exhaust systems.
* Ice baths are normally associated with explosive labs

Remember that these incidents are a crime scene with the primary responsibility for controlling the incident will be the responsibility of law enforcement/DEA.

www.lab-id.net is also a resource to help you identify what type of clan lab it is based on the precursors identified at scene.

DRUG LABS	EXPLOSIVE LABS
Cocaine Conversion	Acid/Base
Ecstasy	Ammonium Nitrate
*Fentanyl	Black Powder
GHB Phenyl-2- Proponone	Chlorate
PCP	EDGN
*THC Extraction, THCa	ETN
Thionyl Chloride	HMTD
Methamphetamine, ICE, One Pot, Nazi/Birch, P-2-P Meth,	Hydrogen Peroxide
	TATP
	Urea Nitrate

*These labs are discussed in detail below.

Clandestine Drug Labs (cont.)

Action Plan Considerations:

*Recognize signs that indicate the presence of an illegal drug operation
*Stay upwind/upgrade from Lab location or abandoned containers.
*Because it is a criminal activity you are likely to face hazards from dangerous people. Ensure law enforcement is on scene at all times
*Begin Site Safety / Incident Action Plan
*Beware of booby traps.
*Determine if evacuations or sheltering in place are necessary.

Unknown lab with active process (Pumps on, fluids cooking down ect)
*Establish zones and Isolate the area.
*Setup emergency decon
*Keep the water on, turn the power off with monitoring equipment near the panel to ensure it is safe to do so
*PPE

Level B: CGI, PID, Rad Pager, PH Paper, F Paper, dräger tubes for vapor/gas
Back out-change PPE if = LEL >2%, PH Paper = Red, F Paper = Yellow

FFTO: CGI, PID, Rad Pager, PH Paper, F Paper, dräger tubes for vapor/gas
Back out & change PPE if = LEL >10% (inside), PH Paper = Red,
F Paper = Yellow

Static drug lab/abandoned drug lab waste/drug suicide attempt
*Establish zones and Isolate the area.
*Setup decon
*PPE:

If law enforcement is in the area processing evidence with no signs or symptoms of chemical exposure universal precautions would be appropriate with standard meters to ensure the area is safe to work in.

**If fentanyl is suspected use proper PPE as mentioned for *Fentanyl/Synthetic Opiates*.

If the area has been secured and not evaluated prior to your arrival
Level B: CGI, PID, Rad Pager, PH Paper, F Paper, dragger for appropriate gas Back out, change PPE if = LEL >2% (hexane), PH Paper = Red from a vapor, F Paper = Yellow

FFTO: CGI, PID, Rad Pager, PH Paper, F Paper,
Back out change PPE if = >10% LEL (Inside), PH Paper = Red,
F Paper = Yellow

*Once the lab area has been evaluated and there is no risk for law enforcement to enter and process evidence universal precautions can be utilized as needed.
*The DEA chemist should assist in deactivating drug lab as they need to obtain samples prior to proper disposal of the drug lab waste.

Clandestine Drug Labs (cont.)

Proper disposal of hazardous waste

Clan Lab disposals are funded through the California Environmental Protection Agency, under a program known as the "Clandestine Laboratory Unit (CLU)". San Diego County's CLU number is CLU111111037. All waste shall be cleared by DEA or LE in charge prior to removal or packaging. Once approved to package waste it needs to be profiled using IR/Hazcat to put into hazard categories to prevent incompatibility. Properly package the waste using the drums and buckets on the vehicles. Small quantities that fit into the back of the truck can be taken to the hazmat locker for removal by a hazardous waste transporter that the DTSC pre-approves. If the volume is too large call the DTSC duty officer (800-852-7550) to get approval for removal on site.

Lab Specific Information

Fentanyl/Synthetic Opiates

Starting in 2017 Fentanyl has become a popular cut in many drugs especially opiates like oxycodone and heroin. Fentanyl is a highly toxic synthetic opiate. There are also many analogues of Fentanyl that are even more toxic than Fentanyl. Visually a couple grains of salt could kill a responder if inhaled. There is an antidote for opioid exposure called Naloxone. The Naloxone is carried by SDFD HM1 & HM2 and Advanced Life Safety (ALS) ambulances. If DEH HIRT is responding to a potential opiate situation SDFD and ALS shall be present to administer Naloxone if needed.

Fentanyl is primarily a respiratory hazard and potential ocular hazard. Dermal toxicity is low for the opioid family. Therefore, the following PPE are recommendations based on the actual risk to the hazard of a solid powder.

** *Example of recommended PPE*

1. Testing an unknown white powder in a climate-controlled room, not suspect to be fentanyl. A drug suicide tested positive for drug other than Fentanyl can also be handled this way.
   PPE: Universal precautions
2. Drug wrappings in an alley with white powder (Outside) or unknown drug overdose.
   PPE: Disposable Tyvek, booties, nitrile 5 mil gloves, Scott mask with P100 filter
3. Cutting operation/pill press, or Exposure with drug effects (Gross contamination) or suspected Fentanyl suicide/overdose
   PPE: Level C with P100/CBRNE filter (PAPR optional)
   (Level B may not be recommended due to potential contamination/decontamination)
4. Drug lab with unknown liquids
   PPE: Standard level B with CGI, PID, Rad Pager, PH Paper, F Paper

Due to fentanyl's high toxicity and the widespread use as a "cut" into a wide range of illegal drugs: Opium, Methamphetamine, and pill press operations. Responders should have immediate access to a fentanyl antidote such as Narcan, during any incident where fentanyl in known or suspected. As of 07/01/2017 DEH HIRT is not authorized to carry such an antidote. SDFD HM 1, an ALS Unit, or law Enforcement may carry Narcan. This should be verified, and a resource should be on scene standing by with an antidote during incidents where fentanyl in known or suspected.

Testing for Fentanyl and other drugs can be done by several local Law Enforcement labs in addition to DEA. DEA may choose not to take samples that are not associated with Drug Enforcement.

THC Extraction

THC Extraction has many faces. The hazards we are concerned with are from liquid solvent extraction, CO2 extraction and gaseous solvent extraction. PPE for all of the THC extraction methods can be FFTO. As with any other situation have the appropriate monitoring instruments and detection paper

PPE: FFTO with CGI, PID, Rad Pager, PH Paper, F Paper,
Back out-change PPE if = LEL >10% inside for liquid solvents and LEL >3% for gaseous solvent, PH Paper = Red, F Paper = Yellow

1. Liquid Solvent Extraction

   This method uses liquid solvents such as IPA, Ethanol, Hexane and Heptane to pull the THC out of the plant. A short soak is normal and then the solvent is needed to evaporate off leaving the THC behind. Many house fires have been started by dehydrating the solvents on the stove. You may see mason jars full of dark liquids that will contain flammable liquids.

2. CO2 Extraction

   CO2 methodology requires sophisticated equipment. This equipment can cost upwards of 100k. The hazards here are three-fold. Oxygen displacement, toxicity of CO2 concentrations greater than 5,000 ppm OSHA PEL and high pressure in the machine itself upwards of 1,500 psi. If you have to vent a CO2 extractor do so with supplied air supply.

   Note: When monitoring with a CGI and the oxygen level starts to drop from the original 20.9 to 20.8 that = 5,000 ppm of contaminate in air. Also, if it continues to drop to 20.7 that = 10,000 ppm of contaminate is air.
   *IDLH for CO2 is 40,000 ppm or 20.*1 % Oxygen

3. Gaseous Solvent Extraction

   This is the most dangerous method of the three as butane/propane can accumulate in the extraction area to the flammable range. Static discharges and open flames are common cause of ignition.

   Recommended action items:

   *Establish zones and Isolate the area
   *Determine if evacuations or sheltering in place are necessary
   *Begin Site Safety / Incident Action Plan
   *Establish a fire suppression line
   *Eliminate all ignition sources
   *Setup emergency decon area with hose line
   *Eliminate power to the building using a CGI to ensure it is safe
   Be aware that the power may be scabbed into another power source
   *Eliminate gas supply to the building
   *Ventilate with area monitoring to ensure no flammable gases are not migrating
   *Upon entry monitor within 6” of the floor at all times

If the LEL sensor goes above *3% BACK OUT* and ventilate as the heavier than air gas has flattened out and there can be areas in the flammable range

*Listen for vacuum pumps that could indicate a closed loop system
*Monitor the entire building
*Once the residence is cleared allow law enforcement to resume operations
*<u>*IF*</u> there is a closed loop system it must be depressurized in an isolated area with continuous monitoring.

*Isolate valves so the system can be taken apart
*Remove the extractor and push weed out with a broom handle or other suitable device and allow it to ventilate

Do not vent the butane reservoir as it will be handled under emergency mitigation and be flared off with the Red Dragon or suitable device.

*Other drug lab wastes can be handled as mentioned above

AB1078

DEH-HIRT has the responsibility to evaluate any methamphetamine laboratories for contamination in compliance with the Methamphetamine Contaminated Properties Act of 2005 requirements (AB1078). Currently any storage over one ounce or active production will require a screening for meth. This process should take place after the drug lab has been evaluated and all waste has been categorized and containerized. This is a two-person process. A checklist has been established below.

1. Obtain the AB1078 packet out of the vehicle
2. Establish who will be the sampler/photographer and recorder
3. Establish a clean area to work on. You can use a drum liner for a clean surface
4. Recorder: Obtain all necessary information from law enforcement
5. Sampler: Start a map of the house to document all rooms, contamination and locations of drugs found/produced
6. Sample in the following order
    a. Kitchen
    b. Bathroom
    c. Bedroom

If the kitchen is positive, the dwelling is posted. If the only bathroom is positive, the dwelling is posted. If the only bedroom is positive, the dwelling is posted. If there are multiple bathrooms and bedrooms and only one is positive, only that space is posted. If the space is posted, secure the structure as best you can. Install the door lock and refer to DYT for follow-up.

<u>Useful Contacts: All numbers validated on July 2017</u>

DEA LAB DUTY CELL.....(760) 594-6276
Drug Enforcement Agency (DEA) .....(858) 616-4100
Narcotics Task Force .....(760) 268-5800
DTSC Duty Officer/Cal OES.....(800) 852-7550
DEH-HIRT (daytime) .....(858) 505-6673
DEH-HIRT (after-hours: New Connections).....(858) 565-5255