

DEPARTMENT GENERAL ORDER 01-03

OFFICE of the CHIEF OF POLICE
REPLACES/AMENDS: None

DATE: June 13, 2001

CLANDESTINE LABORATORIES

I. PURPOSE.

Because of the unstable nature of hazardous materials at clandestine laboratories, and the possible existence of armed booby traps, department employees must exercise extreme caution when a clandestine lab is discovered. Therefore, the following guidelines shall govern the actions of department personnel when operating within such an environment.

II. DEFINITIONS.

Clandestine Laboratory- Concealed or hidden manufacturing apparatus and related chemical storage area.

Methamphetamine - A stimulant closely related to amphetamines. Commonly referred to as speed or crystal, the drug produces extreme hyperactivity, irritability, insomnia, and possible psychosis to include hallucinations and combativeness.

Illegal Dump Sites - Residue and/or chemicals illegally discarded from the Methamphetamine production process.

III. FIRST RESPONDER PROCEDURES.

The first officer or officers on the scene must be able to identify a clandestine laboratory for what it is and take the proper steps to provide for their own and the general public's safety. Once an identification has been made, the initial responding officer(s) should:

1. Immediately retreat from the lab site without touching or disturbing anything. Select an overwatch position upwind and uphill, if possible.
 - a. Do not re-enter laboratory.
 - b. Do not enter spill areas.
 - c. Avoid areas with odors, discoloration, visible air borne particles.
2. Detain any suspects or witnesses.
3. Request a supervisor and additional assistance respond to the scene. This will include fire and EMS units.
4. Establish a secure perimeter around the site at a distance of approximately three (300) feet. Utilize police tape, vehicles, etc. as needed.
5. Evacuate civilians from within the secure area.
6. Request appropriate notifications be made.
7. Treat the area as a crime scene.

IV. HAZARDS.

In addition to the threat of chemical contamination, law enforcement personnel have encountered various types of booby traps at clandestine lab sites. The following comprises a generic description of some of the devices encountered:

1. Small foil balls containing a strong oxidizer, reactive metal and a solvent. Extremely shock sensitive, unstable, and explosive. Usually marble to golf ball size.
2. Light switches wired to flammable liquid containers, rigged light bulbs, or other explosive devices.
3. Refrigerator doors (and their internal light bulbs) wired to detonate an explosive liquid when opened.

4. Mock video cassettes altered to detonate an internal explosive when placed into a VCR.
5. CO2 cartridges, gun barrels, steel pipes, and dummy hand grenades filled with explosive material and connected to a detonation device.
6. Hydrogen cyanide gas generator.
7. Open flammable liquid adjacent to an incendiary device.
8. Attack dogs and poisonous snakes.
9. Monofilament trip wires connected to chemical or explosive devices or weapons.

Department members should refrain from touching anything in a clandestine laboratory and effect their exit from a lab environment in the most timely manner possible.

V. SAFETY GUIDELINES.

Chemicals associated with clandestine labs pose a major health and environmental risk to those who may be exposed to same. Therefore, the following safety guidelines should always be followed:

1. Do not turn the electricity on or off.
2. Do not turn off any faucets or water supplies.
3. Do not touch anything.
4. Do not attempt to dismantle the lab or seize evidence.
5. Do not eat or drink in or near the lab site.
6. Do not smoke or ignite any flammable materials.
7. Do not put any objects in the mouth (e.g. gum, pens, etc.).
8. Discard cigarettes and/or similar items that may have been carried into a site or otherwise subjected to potential contamination.

VI. NOTIFICATIONS.

The ranking officer at the scene of a clandestine lab shall direct communications to contact the St. Louis County Police Department Bureau of Drug Enforcement or the St. Louis County Office of Emergency Management at the local level, and the Drug Enforcement Administration at the federal level.

Once the proper notifications have been made, officers shall continue to secure the scene and await the arrival of trained personnel.

A. Evidence Collection and Dismantling of Laboratory

Only those law enforcement personnel who have been certified for clandestine laboratories by DEA or another qualified agency, and are properly equipped, shall be permitted inside the laboratory to collect evidence and dismantle same. Under no circumstances will officers of this command attempt to seize evidence or dismantle a clandestine laboratory prior to the arrival of trained specialists.

In addition to the above, Missouri Department of Natural Resources Environment Emergency Response personnel may be contacted and requested to assist in determining if an imminent threat to public health and the safety of the environment exists at a clandestine lab site.

VII. DECONTAMINATION.

Officers who have been contaminated or feel they have been exposed as a result of being in or near a clandestine drug laboratory, will immediately report their condition to EMS personnel. Decontamination and/or medical treatment shall then be administered as soon as practical.

VIII. TRANSPORTATION OF HAZARDOUS MATERIALS.

The transportation of equipment and hazardous wastes seized from clandestine labs shall be transported in accordance with applicable regulations issued by the Missouri Department of Natural Resources and the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency.

Hazardous wastes will be transported by trained personnel only.

If the amount of seized hazardous materials is less than 220 pounds, same may be transported to a collection station/area by the specialists responsible for the seizure of the materials. If the amount of material seized from a drug lab exceeds 220 pounds, the wastes must be transported by a licensed hazardous waste hauler, under a manifest, directly to a permitted treatment, storage, or disposal facility.

IX. REPORTING PROCEDURES.

Incident reporting procedures will adhere to currently established procedures.

BY ORDER OF:

RICHARD T. MORRIS
Chief of Police

RTM:dld

CALEA Reference: 43.1.1