

METHAMPHETAMINE FACT SHEET

North Carolina Division of Public Health • Occupational and Environmental Epidemiology Branch

Chemical Information

- Extremely addictive stimulant drug that affects the Central Nervous System (CNS).
- Chemically similar to amphetamine.
- Illegal to manufacture.
- White, odorless, bitter-tasting crystalline powder.
- Flammable and a strong fire risk.
- Easily dissolves in water and alcohol.
- Can be injected, snorted, taken orally, or smoked.

Meth Lab Characteristics

- May be set up at campgrounds, rest areas, homes, motel rooms, abandoned cars, garages, storage sheds and vacant buildings.
- Typically includes a collection of chemical bottles, glassware, hoses, and pressurized cylinders.

Tips

- Never enter an active meth lab.
- Contact 911 immediately.

Cooking Methods

- One pot/Nazi method, most commonly known as “shake ‘n bake”
- Red phosphorous/iodine method
- Ammonia method

Hazards Identification

Acute Exposure:

- Increased activity and wakefulness
- Decreased appetite
- Feelings of euphoria
- Increased respiration
- Rapid/irregular heartbeat and rapid heart rate
- Hyperthermia
- Increased blood pressure
- Increased body temperature

Chronic Exposure:

- Long-term use leads to physical dependence.
- Gives person periods of high energy and rapid speech.
- Can experience severe depression, anxiety, confusion, insomnia, and violent behavior.
- Can also show symptoms of psychosis, such as paranoia, visual and auditory hallucinations, and delusions.
- Can experience memory loss and weight loss.

Common Equipment Used in

Meth Production

- Over-the-counter medications that contain ephedrine or pseudoephedrine
- Red phosphorous
- Hydrogen peroxide
- Iodine
- Starter fluid
- Acetone, toluene, alcohol or paint thinner
- Anhydrous ammonia
- Drain cleaner containing sodium hydroxide (lye)
- Lithium batteries
- Sulfuric acid, muriatic acid, or phosphoric acid
- 2L soda bottle or Gatorade bottle

Warning Signs of Suspected Meth Lab:

- House windows are covered with plastic or tin foil.
- Strong or unusual odors are coming from the house.
- Renters pay their rent with cash.
- Unusual security systems or other devices.
- Excessive number of cold medicine packs, peeled batteries, cold packs, and lantern fuel in and around the house.
- Increased activity around the house, especially at night.
- Unusual structures around the property.
- Discoloration of structures, pavement and soil.