

How Meth Impacts You

Average, law-abiding citizens are more likely to be impacted by methamphetamine than by other drugs. That's because users of methamphetamine—a highly addictive illegal stimulant—can and often do manufacture their own product right in our backyards: in homes, motel rooms, storage containers, parks, or even the trunks of their cars. The Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA) estimates that more than a third of the meth used in America today is manufactured by users.

Making meth involves the use of over-the-counter cold medicines and many caustic, toxic chemicals: starter fluid (ether), drain cleaner (sulfuric acid), nail polish remover (acetone), batteries (lithium metal), and road flares (red phosphorus), which can poison the environment and cost thousands of dollars to clean up. Meth users who use these chemicals to make their own drug often cause explosions and fires.

Meth users are aggressive. The drug makes them dangerous because of its effects on the brain and body. Users can go without food or sleep for days. They are agitated and paranoid. Users seek more and more meth to get high.

As a result, meth causes great harm to neighborhoods and innocent people.

Resources

For more information on meth, or if you believe there may be a meth lab in your community, contact your local DEA office (look in your phone directory or go to www.dea.gov on the internet for a list of locations).

For assistance for people who have been victimized by meth users or makers:

- ◆ Click on “Resources for Victims” on the DEA website home page or call 866-254-5970;
- ◆ Go to the U. S. Department of Justice’s Office for Victims of Crime website at www.ojp.usdoj.gov/ovc;
- ◆ Visit the National Alliance for Drug-Endangered Children website at www.nationaldec.org.

Additional sources of information on meth include:

- ◆ The National Institute on Drug Abuse website (www.drugabuse.gov);
- ◆ The White House Office of National Drug Control Policy website (www.whitehousedrugpolicy.gov);
- ◆ Federal Trade Commission website (www.ftc.gov) regarding identity theft;
- ◆ The Agricultural Retailers Association (800-844-4900) and The Fertilizer Institute (202-675-8250) regarding protecting ammonia tanks from tampering and theft.

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www.dea.gov

National Drug Awareness Program

“Prevention through Education”

www.elks.org/drugs

Drug Awareness Program funding is provided by the Elks National Foundation, the charitable arm of the Benevolent and Protective Order of Elks of the USA. The Elks are committed to providing a healthy future for America’s youth. In addition to educating young people about the dangers of drugs, the Elks provide positive alternatives such as the Hoop Shoot® and Soccer Shoot athletic programs and Youth Veteran Volunteers. The Elks National Foundation also annually awards more than \$3 million in college scholarships.

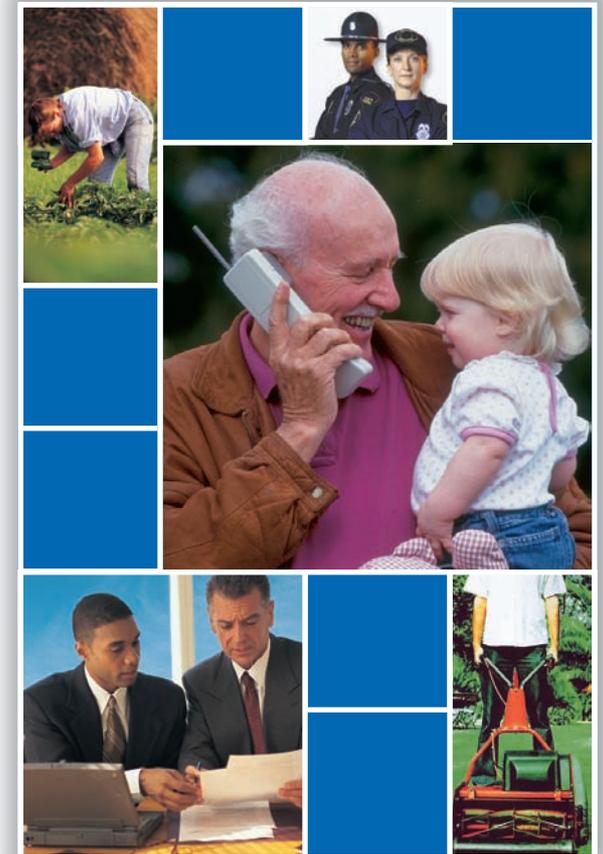
For more information, contact your local Elks Lodge or visit the Elks website at www.elks.org/YouthActivities.cfm.

Elks

NATIONAL DRUG AWARENESS PROGRAM

METHAMPHETAMINE:

It's Everybody's Problem



METHAMPHETAMINE: *It's Everybody's Problem*

Residents

Why should homeowners, landlords and tenants, property managers, motel/hotel personnel and real estate professionals be concerned about meth?

- ◆ Dangerous, unstable, and paranoid people move into the neighborhood (users and makers [called *cooks*] and their customers).
- ◆ The chemical contamination of soil, water and air that meth generates can endanger residents and affect neighboring properties. Property values and real estate revenues are reduced. Buildings are rendered uninhabitable and cannot be sold. Property owners are responsible for the cost of environmental remediation (Environmental Protection Agency regulations). Contamination must be disclosed when a property is listed for sale.
- ◆ Meth users destroy property. "Cooking" houses are frequently eyesores, with unkempt grounds and discarded containers, equipment and other trash littering the premises.
- ◆ Residents' quality of life is diminished by increased traffic, noise (users and cooks are up all night), chemical and garbage smells (such as the scent of chemicals that smell like cat urine), the barking of guard dogs, and the influx of threatening people.

Community Leaders

Why should managers of community institutions such as schools, hospitals, banks and parks be concerned about meth?

- ◆ It strains health services in a variety of ways: catastrophic care for the uninsured (many meth cooks are admitted to burn units multiple times for extended free care following explosions and fires); dental care for meth users in prison who have "meth mouth" (meth in the bloodstream consumes cells, deposits toxins, and destroys healthy tissue, including teeth and gums).

- ◆ It increases all crime, including robbery, assault, burglary, identity theft (such as stealing mail from mailboxes), credit card fraud, and property crimes, creating a threatening environment for vulnerable members of society, such as the elderly.
- ◆ It spawns domestic violence and child abuse, resulting in increased social service costs for drug-endangered children.
- ◆ It increases catastrophic events such as accidents, explosions, fires and chemical leaks.
- ◆ It spreads infectious disease through contaminated needles and vermin.
- ◆ Because some meth cooks set up labs in remote outdoor areas, like parks, citizens are at risk.
- ◆ The number of teens using meth is increasing, and meth-using students are disruptive and potentially dangerous.

Business Owners and Operators

Some businesses are affected by meth more than others.

- ◆ Meter readers or utility repairmen, mail carriers, park employees, first responders such as firefighters and police, sanitation workers, hotel/motel workers, storage container operators, Realtors and insurance adjusters come in contact with meth cooks or the dangerous chemicals in a meth lab.
- ◆ Veterinary clinics and feed and tack stores are frequently broken into by meth cooks seeking iodine.
- ◆ Pharmacies and retail organizations are frequently targeted for robberies of over-the-counter medications used in meth production.

Agricultural Industry

- ◆ Meth cooks steal anhydrous ammonia from the tanks maintained by fertilizer plants, retail facilities and farmers, frequently causing leaks. One leak from a tank killed everything within a 10-acre area; another killed 30 dairy cows in their barn.

First Responders

First responders such as police officers, paramedics and firefighters encounter meth labs in their jobs.

- ◆ Portable meth labs or containers of chemical ingredients are sometimes found in car trunks. The chemicals or equipment may explode or leak, contaminating, injuring or killing first responders.
- ◆ The long-term health risks of chemical exposure are serious; many medical studies are underway.

The DEA provides training about meth for first responders. Call the DEA's Headquarters Demand Reduction Section at 202-307-7936 to find an agent near you who can provide training for your organization.

Family Members

Domestic violence and child abuse and neglect are rampant among meth users and cooks.

- ◆ Children are reared among the components and debris of meth labs and are often burned or injured. Their home environment frequently includes firearms, vermin, razor blades, syringes and refrigerated ingredients that are mistaken for juice or soda.
- ◆ When removed upon discovery, these children are often found to have high levels of drugs and toxic chemicals in their bodies. Meth-using mothers transfer meth to their babies during nursing.
- ◆ First responders and federal agents who arrive at the scene of a meth lab frequently must call Child Protective Services to rescue children they find at the lab. Over 15,000 children have been rescued from meth labs.