

Methamphetamines

Methamphetamines have become a growing concern for our community and surrounding areas. On the street Methamphetamines are called, meth, speed, crank, ice, to name a few. Ninety nine percent of first time meth users are hooked after the first try. Another sobering statistic is that life expectancy of a meth user is only about 5 years! Also in reality, 90-95 percent of the people that try to kick the drug habit will go right back to it. Just think that one pound of meth equals about 5 pounds of toxic waste produced when manufactured! Questions we can ask about Meth are: What is it? How do we know if someone around us is making it? What can we do? There are certain things we can be watchful of in our neighborhoods.

What are Methamphetamines? Meth is a powerful stimulant that activates certain areas of the brain. By using meth, one might experience wakefulness, increased physical activity, decreased appetite, increased respirations, hypothermia, and an extreme sense of euphoria. Your heart rate increases and your mind play dangerous tricks on you. Other effects could be irritability, insomnia, confusion, tremors, convulsions, anxiety, paranoia or aggressiveness. You could even experience imaginary bugs! The use of meth can lead to irreversible damage to the central nervous system, liver and kidneys. Meth is also known to cause cancer, permanent brain damage or even result in death. Hopefully no one wants to live like this!

Where does Methamphetamines come from? Meth is made from using many different volatile chemicals that can be found and cooked right at home. Compounds such as explosives, acids, bases, metals, and chemical salts might be utilized, which could include acetone, alcohol, methanol, ether, or sulfuric acid to just name a few. When these chemicals are used to make meth in a building, they can contaminate carpeting, wall board, ceiling tile, wood or fabric. If residues filter into the ventilation system, other areas in the building can become contaminated. Also, the ground soil and water may become involved. It now becomes a public hazard.

How do I recognize the signs of a meth lab? There are various clues that could lead one to be suspicious about a house in their neighborhood. Ask yourself various questions:

Do your neighbors have visitors at odd hours of the day or night?

Do your neighbors appear unemployed, but seem to have plenty of money?

Are your neighbors unfriendly and appear to be secretive about what goes on?

Are the windows blackened or the curtains always drawn?

Do the occupants go outside to smoke cigarettes?

Do you smell chemical odors coming from the house, garage or detached buildings?

Do you notice that your neighbor's garbage contains numerous bottles or containers of cleaning solvents?

Do you notice your neighbor setting their garbage out at another neighbor's house?

Do you notice evidence of chemical dumping? (Burned or dead spots in the yard.)

A lab can use ordinary cooking items. Items that might be used in a lab are: coffee filters, bulb syringes, rubber gloves, masks, paper towels, blenders, baking dishes, coolers, portable burners, and glass jars to name a few items. Another clue of a user could be an individual who buys cold medications, and or household cleaning agents in large quantities.

Meth use and manufacture are associated with increased crime, personal violence and child abuse. There is also a demand for medical and social services when the use of meth is involved. Any one clue may not be evidence of a meth lab, but if you think there is a problem 'brewing' then call the police. Do not confront the individual! Meth is a dangerous situation.

As always, if you have any questions or comments, please eMail me at gheffelmire@dearborncounty.in.gov

