

What Are the Health Risks?

Meth causes health problems not just for the users but also for others who are unintentionally exposed to meth and the chemicals used to make meth.

Exposure to high levels of contaminants found in meth labs over a short period of time may cause shortness of breath, coughing, chest pain, dizziness, lack of coordination, tissue irritation, contact burns, and possibly even death. Less severe symptoms, including headache, nausea, and fatigue may occur in people who enter a meth lab after a bust but before the property has been adequately cleaned and aired out. Less serious symptoms will usually disappear after several hours away from the chemicals.

Currently, we do not understand the potential health risks after prolonged exposure to low levels of contaminants found in meth labs. Some long-term effects associated with the chemicals used to make meth include cancer; brain, liver, and kidney damage; birth defects and miscarriages.

No one should re-occupy a property previously used as an illegal lab until the property has been properly decontaminated.

Who Do I Call?

To report a suspected lab, call Idaho State Police (ISP) Investigation Lab Team Headquarter Office at **208-884-7120** or the ISP Investigation office in your area.



Region 1: 769-1433
Region 2: 799-5020
Region 3: 884-7110
Region 4: 736-3055
Region 5: 237-1210
Region 6: 523-2801

For general questions and concerns about the health effects of meth labs, call Idaho Division of Health, Bureau of Community and Environmental Health at **208-334-5927** or visit our web site at http://www.healthandwelfare.idaho.gov/Portals/_Rainbow/Documents/health/meth_labs.pdf.

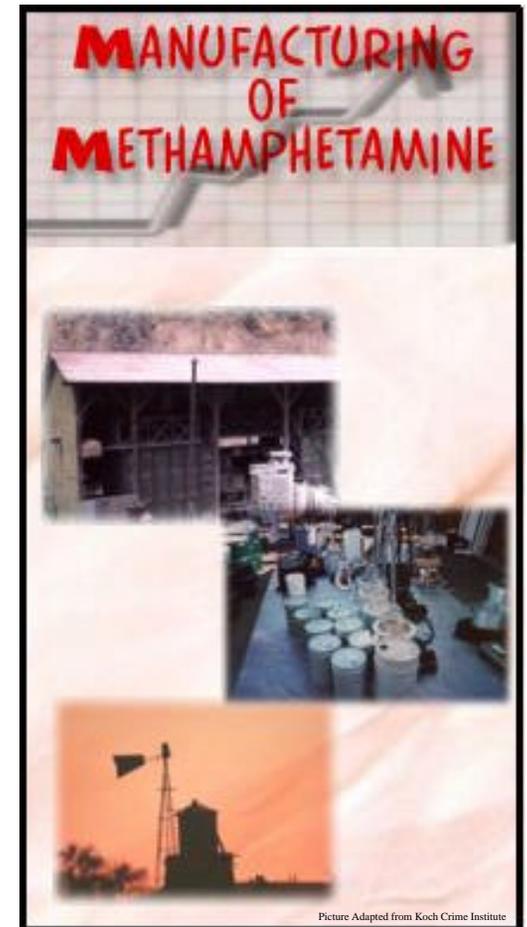
For questions about outdoor contamination and cleanup, call Idaho Department of Environmental Quality at **208-373-0502**.



Costs associated with this publication are available from the Idaho Department of Health and Welfare.

Meth Labs

Are they in your neighborhood?



Picture Adapted from Koch Crime Institute

What Is Meth?

Methamphetamine (meth) is a powerful, highly toxic, and addictive drug. Meth is also known as speed, crank, ice, and crystal. Like cocaine, meth can be smoked, snorted, injected or taken by mouth. The appearance of meth varies depending on how it is used. Typically, it is a white, odorless powder, but it can be a clear, large, chunky crystal.



From 1995 to 2000, meth lab seizures in Idaho increased 700%. According to police, meth is cheap and easy to make. Illegal meth labs may be set up at homes, campgrounds, rest areas, rental properties, motel rooms, abandoned cars, garages, storage sheds, barns, and vacant buildings. Many neighborhoods, just like yours, have already seen these makeshift labs. As a private citizen, you can help stop illegal meth labs in your neighborhood by learning the signs of meth labs and reporting them to the police.

How Can You Recognize a Meth Lab?

Alone, any of these activities or signs may not mean that drug dealing or meth manufacturing is occurring. However, some or several of them happening together may indicate a problem.

- Strong odors of solvents or ammonia coming from the house, garage or detached buildings.
- Windows blacked out or curtains always drawn.
- Exhaust fans on house or outbuilding constantly running or running in cold weather.
- Excessive trash that frequently has numerous empty bottles and containers, coffee filters with red stains, and lithium batteries that have been broken open.
- Frequent visitors at all times of the day or night.
- Frequent deliveries of glassware and chemicals made by parcel services.
- Person is unemployed, yet seems to have plenty of money, pays bills with cash.
- Always going outside to smoke cigarettes.
- Person is paranoid and behaves oddly.

What Are Common Meth Lab Supplies?

Chemicals

- cold tablets
- alcohol
- starter fluid
- camping fuel
- anti-freeze
- drain cleaner
- rock salt
- farm fertilizer
- red devil lye
- matches
- iodine
- acids
- lithium batteries

Equipment

- coffee filters or cheesecloth
- aluminum foil
- plastic tubing
- Pyrex or Corning dishes
- jugs and bottles
- funnels
- strainer
- blender
- hotplate
- gas can
- propane tank

WARNING!

DO NOT ENTER a site nor handle materials you think may be used for cooking meth. If you unknowingly enter a lab and see something cooking that you think may be meth, **DO NOT TURN IT OFF**. Leave the property immediately. Interrupting a chemical reaction may cause an explosion.

Labs present extreme dangers from explosions and exposure to hazardous chemicals. Breathing the fumes and handling substances can cause injury and even death.