

## ***General Fact Sheet***

### ***Methamphetamine Use and Production***

Methamphetamine, also known as “meth”, “crank”, “Crystal” and “ice” is a very powerful synthetic drug that affects the central nervous system. It is illegally made in makeshift laboratories hastily created in remote areas, rental property, motel rooms, and storage units. Once a lab is shut down or abandoned, the property is often left contaminated with hazardous chemicals. No one should enter a known lab or former lab unless they are wearing appropriate personal protective equipment.

#### **WHAT DOES METH DO TO IT’S USERS?**

The effects of meth are similar to those of cocaine. It gives the user an immediate “rush” or intense feeling of pleasure when taken. Meth is popular because the effects usually last longer than that from cocaine and the drug is relatively easy to produce from easily-obtained ingredients. Meth can be injected, snorted, ingested, or smoked. Long-term use leads to physical dependence.

Meth causes the user to experience periods of high energy, rapid speech and breathing, increased body temperature and blood pressure. Associated feelings are often severe depression, paranoia, insomnia, loss of appetite, delusions and tremors. Continued use or the use of large doses often causes delusions, hallucinations, or violent behavior.

#### **WHAT CHEMICALS ARE USED TO MAKE METH?**

A number of chemical processes are used to manufacture meth. Most of them include the use of volatile organic compounds, explosives, acids, metals, and chemical salts. A number of harmful chemicals are created during the manufacturing process and then abandoned, discarded, or absorbed into carpeting, wallboard, ceiling tile, wood, and fabric.

## **WHAT ARE THE POTENTIAL HEALTH EFFECTS?**

The effects depend on a number of variables:

- the specific chemicals to which the person is exposed
- the amount of chemical exposure
- the length of time a person is exposed
- the general health of the exposed person

Exposure to meth residues may cause symptoms similar to those experienced by meth users, and may include nose and throat irritation, headaches, dizziness, nausea, vomiting, confusion, and breathing difficulties.

Exposure to acid or base chemicals will cause a burning sensation on the skin and in the mucous membranes, and can cause severe eye damage. Exposure to metals and salts can cause a wide range of health effects including respiratory irritation, decreased mental function, kidney damage, and birth defects. Lead and mercury are particularly hazardous.

## **WHO IS FINANCIALLY RESPONSIBLE FOR CLEANUP?**

Although law enforcement will normally clean up an illegal lab site, the property owner is ultimately responsible for any costs incurred should law enforcement not be made aware of the site.

## **WHERE CAN I GET MORE INFORMATION?**

Contact the Prairie du Chien Police Department at (608) 326-2421, the Clayton County Sheriff's Department at (563) 245-2422 or the Tri-River Area Special Operations Team at either number.