

Office of National Drug Control Policy

Drug Policy Information Clearinghouse

San Diego, California

Profile of Drug Indicators

November 2008



ONDCP Drug Policy Information Clearinghouse staff compiled this profile by using the most recent data available from open sources. The data presented are as accurate as the sources from which they were drawn. The information contained in this profile should not be used to rank or compare states or jurisdictions, due to differences in data collection and reporting methods.

San Diego, California

The following profile contains information on demographics, political figures, programs, crime, drug use, drug trafficking and enforcement.

Demographics

- Population (2006 American Community Survey): 1,261,251¹
- Race/ethnicity (2006 American Community Survey): 65.0% white; 6.9% black/African American; 0.6% American Indian/Alaska Native; 15.3% Asian; 0.4% Native Hawaiian/other Pacific Islander; 8.4% other race; 3.5% two or more races; 27.1% Hispanic/Latino (of any race)²
- The city of San Diego is located in San Diego County.

Politics

- Mayor: Jerry Sanders³
- City Council (Districts 1-8, respectively): Scott Peters, Kevin Faulconer, Toni Atkins, Tony Young, Brian Maienschein, Donna Frye, Jim Madaffer, Ben Hueso⁴
- San Diego Police Chief: William Lansdowne⁵
- San Diego County Sheriff: Bill Kolender⁶

Programs/Initiatives

- High Intensity Drug Trafficking Area (HIDTA)⁷
The Southwest Border HIDTA California Regional Partnership, known as California Border Alliance Group (CBAG), was designated in 1990 as one of the five partnerships of the Southwest Border HIDTA. The geographic area of responsibility of CBAG is San Diego and Imperial Counties.
- Landlord Training Program⁸
The Landlord Training Program was designed to promote positive and responsible partnerships between landlords, tenants and the San Diego Police. These partnerships are vital to effectively preventing drug dealing and other illegal activities at rental properties located within San Diego neighborhoods.
- San Diego County Methamphetamine Strike Force⁹
The San Diego County Board of Supervisors authorized the formation of a multi-disciplinary Methamphetamine Strike Force in 1996. The Meth Strike Force is composed of approximately 70 member organizations and agencies, including local, state and Federal representatives from public health, law enforcement, judiciary, education, treatment, prevention and intervention agencies.
- Clean Syringe Exchange Pilot Program¹⁰
San Diego developed a Clean Syringe Exchange Pilot Program with a drug abuse treatment referral component in response to a public health crisis relating to the rapid spread of Hepatitis C and HIV through the shared use of needles and syringes.

Crime and Drug-Related Crime

- From January through September 2008, there were 46 homicides reported by the San Diego Police Department.¹¹ During full year 2007, there were 58 homicides reported by the Department.¹²

Number of Index Offenses Known to Police, San Diego, 2007-Sept. 2008

Offense	Full Year 2007	Jan.-Sept 2008
Murder	58	46
Rape	296	278
Robbery	2,095	1,503
Aggravated assault	3,882	2,730
Burglary	7,679	5,640
Larceny	23,264	16,712
Vehicle theft	13,224	8,253
Crime index total	50,498	35,162

Drugs

- Cocaine
Cocaine prices in San Diego during 2006 were as follows: \$60-\$160/gram, \$30-\$100/one-quarter gram, and \$10-\$25/one-tenth gram.¹³
- Heroin
During 2006, heroin sold for \$50-\$100/gram (Mexican black tar), \$20/one-quarter gram (Mexican black tar) and \$80-\$100/gram (powder).¹⁴
- Marijuana
During 2006, marijuana sold for \$80-\$100/ounce in San Diego.¹⁵
- Methamphetamine
Methamphetamine continues to be the primary drug of abuse in San Diego, but there are some early signs that persistent increases in indicators of use and abuse may be abating. Methamphetamine continues to be relatively inexpensive in San Diego, no doubt because of the county's close proximity to Mexico and its status as the first U.S. stop for shipments headed to more northern and eastern destinations of the United States.¹⁶ Crystal meth prices in the City of San Diego during the first half of 2007 were as follows: \$9,000-\$17,000/pound, \$750-\$1,250/ounce and \$20-\$25/one-quarter gram.¹⁷
- Other Drugs
The San Diego area prescription drugs of choice are Vicodin, VicodinES, Lortab and Vicoprofen.¹⁸
- In 2007, 61% of San Diego County adult arrestees tested positive for at least one type of drug.¹⁹
- Approximately 24% of San Diego County adult male arrestees and 44% of adult female arrestees tested positive for methamphetamine in 2007.²⁰

% of Adult Arrestees Testing Positive for Drugs, San Diego County, 2007

Drug Type	Male	Female
Cocaine	11%	16%
Marijuana	37	29
Methamphetamine	24	44
Heroin	6	8
Any drug	57	69

- Among San Diego County arrestees interviewed for the use of illicit drugs and other drugs, 54% of males and 63% of females reported using methamphetamine at least once in their lifetime.²¹

% of Adult Arrestees Reporting Illicit Drug Use, Select Drugs, San Diego Co., 2007

Drug Type and Use	Male	Female
Lifetime cocaine use	47%	41%
Past 30 day cocaine use	7	8
Lifetime crack use	31	31
Past 30 day crack use	6	14
Lifetime marijuana use	82	86
Past 30 day marijuana use	48	45
Lifetime meth use	54	63
Past 30 day meth use	25	42
Lifetime heroin use	22	20
Past 30 heroin use	7	6

- Among San Diego County arrestees interviewed for the use of prescription drugs and other drugs, 40% reported lifetime illegal use of a prescription drug and 42% reported lifetime use of other illicit drugs.²²

% of Adult Arrestees Reporting Lifetime Drug Use, Select Drugs, San Diego Co., 2007

Drug Type	Percent
Tranquilizers	25%
Painkillers	24
OxyContin	12
Amphetamines	8
Morphine	8
Darvon/Darvocet	7
Barbiturates	6
Methadone	5
Anti-depressants	4
Demerol/Fentanyl	4
Any prescription drug	40
Peyote/Mescaline/Mushrooms	25
Ecstasy	22
LSD	21
PCP	13
Inhalants	13
Ketamine	6
GHB	6
Any other illicit drug	42

- Among San Diego County arrestees testing positive for multiple drugs, 28% reported that they had been in a gang or associated with one. Among those arrestees with no gang associations, 19% tested positive for multiple drugs.²³

% of Adult Arrestees Testing Positive for Drugs, Gang Affiliation, San Diego Co., 2007

Drug Type	Gang/Affiliation	No Affiliation
Marijuana	46%	29%
Methamphetamine	38	28
Multiple drugs	28	19

Juveniles

- A 2007 survey of San Diego high school students indicated that 34.6% had tried marijuana at least once in their lifetimes.²⁴

Percent of High School Students Using Drugs, San Diego, 1999-2007

Drug Type and Use	1999	2001	2003	2005	2007
Lifetime marijuana	43.1%	41.8%	42.5%	39.2%	34.6%
Current marijuana	22.2	22.5	22.4	18.6	16.6
Lifetime cocaine	8.4	8.8	7.7	8.6	8.6
Current cocaine	3.2	3.8	3.0	4.1	3.6
Lifetime inhalant	11.7	11.3	12.8	13.5	10.7
Lifetime heroin	2.6	2.9	2.7	3.2	3.2
Lifetime meth	9.2	8.4	7.6	7.9	6.4
Lifetime ecstasy	n/a	n/a	9.0	7.4	9.0
Lifetime illegal steroid	3.4	5.2	4.4	4.1	3.8

Enforcement

- As of October 2007, there were 2,675 full-time law enforcement employees in San Diego (1,924 officers and 751 civilians).²⁵

Trafficking and Seizures

- San Diego County remains a principal transshipment zone for a variety of drugs smuggled from Mexico.²⁶
- Mexican traffickers typically use commercial and private marinas in San Diego County for maritime smuggling activities. Independent smugglers use small boats to transport marijuana and, occasionally, combine a drug load with illegal aliens.²⁷
- Drug traffickers transport drug shipments as air freight through the San Diego International Airport.²⁸
- During 2006, 20,240 drug items were analyzed by San Diego County forensic laboratories.²⁹

Number/Percent of Drugs Analyzed by Laboratories, San Diego County, 2006

Drug Type	Number	Percent
Cocaine	2,892	14.3%
Heroin	530	2.6

Cannabis	8,844	43.7
Methamphetamine	6,276	31.0
All other drugs	1,697	8.4
Total	20,240	100.0

- During 2007, CBAG task forces and member agencies seized more approximately 871 kilograms of methamphetamine.³⁰

Amount of Drugs Seized by CBAG Task Forces/Agencies, 2007

Drug Type	Amount Seized
Marijuana	159,160.38 kilograms
Cocaine	4,286.58 kilograms
Heroin	126.00 kilograms
Methamphetamine	871.16 kilograms

- Indoor cannabis cultivation is prevalent in San Diego County. Caucasian, Hispanic and African American independent growers run small scale cultivation operations in commercial properties and private residences typically located within suburban neighborhoods.³¹
- During 2007, 334,131 cannabis plants were eradicated in San Diego County under the DEA's Domestic Cannabis Eradication/Suppression Program.³²

Number of Cannabis Plants Eradicated/Seized, San Diego County, 2005-2007

Year	Indoor	Outdoor	Total
2005	13,981	169,452	183,433
2006	13,443	243,044	256,487
2007	13,650	320,481	334,131

- During 2006 CBAG task forces disrupted 25 and dismantled 5 drug trafficking organizations.³³

Courts

- Drug Courts³⁴
As of August 11, 2008, there were 3 drug courts in San Diego that had been in existence for more than 2 years. There were no additional drug courts in existence or being planned in San Diego at that time.

Corrections

- As of December 31, 2007, approximately 7.6% (13,053 offenders) of the California Department of Corrections inmate population had San Diego County as their county of commitment.³⁵
- The county of commitment for 6.6% (9,089 offenders) of the California parole population on December 31, 2007 was San Diego County.³⁶

Consequences of Use

- During 2007, there were 65 alcohol-drug/medication-related deaths in San Diego County.³⁷
- Drug-related kidnappings in the San Diego area are increasing. According to the San Diego Division of the FBI, kidnapping incidents increased 25% from 2006 to 2007.³⁸
- The San Diego Police Department reports that abusers in its jurisdiction, particularly methamphetamine abusers, commonly commit identity theft, automobile theft, shoplifting or prostitution to support their addictions.³⁹
- Approximately 46% of arrestees in San Diego County reported driving a car while under the influence of alcohol or drugs and nearly half (48%), reported riding in a vehicle with a driver who had been drinking or using drugs.⁴⁰
- From April 17 through December 31, there were 1,311 HIV cases reported in San Diego County. Eleven percent of cases among males were attributed to injection drug use (IDU) or male-to-male sex and IDU. Twenty-two percent of cases among females were attributed directly to IDU, and 7% were attributed to sex with an IDU.⁴¹

Treatment

- Nearly half of drug treatment admissions (excluding alcohol) in San Diego County during the first half of 2006 were for primary methamphetamine abuse.⁴²

Primary Treatment Admissions (Excluding Alcohol), San Diego County, Jan.-June 2006

Drug Type	Number	% of Total
Cocaine	458	8.2%
Heroin	1,239	22.3
Other opiates	160	2.9
Marijuana/hashish	925	16.6
Methamphetamine	2,724	49.0
All other drugs	57	0.9
Total	5,563	100.0

- Approximately 17% of adult arrestees in San Diego County surveyed in 2007 reported that they had sought substance abuse treatment, but that it was unavailable.⁴³

Sources

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² Ibid.

³ San Diego Mayor's Web site: <http://www.sandiego.gov/mayor/>

⁴ San Diego City Council Web site: <http://www.sandiego.gov/citycouncil/>

⁵ San Diego Police Department Web site, Biography of Chief Lansdowne: <http://www.sandiego.gov/police/pdf/chiefbio.pdf>

⁶ San Diego County Sheriff's Department Web site: <http://www.sdsheriff.net/home/index.html>

⁷ Office of National Drug Control Policy, Southwest Border High Intensity Drug Trafficking Area: <http://www.whitehousedrugpolicy.gov/hidta/cali.html>

⁸ San Diego Police Department Web site, Landlord Training Program: <http://www.sandiego.gov/police/prevention/landlord.shtml>

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- ²¹ Ibid.
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