



BJA Bureau of Justice Assistance Fact Sheet

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Strategic Approaches to Clandestine Drug Laboratory Enforcement

The epidemic of methamphetamine abuse, trafficking, and production in the United States is a fast-growing national problem that has been likened to the crack cocaine epidemic of the early 1990s. In the past few years, the methamphetamine problem has spread from the West to the Pacific Northwest, Southwest, and Midwest. Numerous states in the South are also experiencing a rapid increase in the production and trafficking of methamphetamine.

Methamphetamine is relatively simple to manufacture in clandestine laboratories from commonly available ingredients, including over-the-counter cold medicine (pseudoephedrine), ephedrine, red phosphorus, hydrochloric acid, iodine, ether, alcohol, lye, and anhydrous ammonia. These chemicals and the waste products produced during the manufacturing process are dangerous to human health and the environment.

Clandestine drug laboratories (commonly known as “clan labs”) often house substantial quantities of highly toxic, corrosive, flammable, and explosive chemicals. These clan labs may be found in such locations as hotel and motel rooms, barns, trailers, recreational vehicles, apartments, and rural areas. Clandestine laboratory sites have been the scene of explosions, fires, toxic fumes, poisonous gases, environmental damage, and numerous injuries and deaths. For every pound of finished product, five to six pounds of chemical waste are produced.

The presence of these hazardous materials complicates enforcement efforts and requires augmentation of traditional procedures to effectively address health, occupational safety, and environmental concerns. Because of the special expertise required for clan lab investigations,

seizures, and cleanups, coordination of resources among multidisciplinary teams of federal, state, and local agencies is of the utmost importance.

Background

The Bureau of Justice Assistance (BJA) of the U.S. Department of Justice provided funds to five state and local agencies to develop and implement demonstration clandestine laboratory enforcement programs covering all phases of planning, investigation, seizure, arrest, prosecution, dismantling, waste removal, and remediation of contaminated property. The collective experience of these demonstration sites served as the basis of the Clandestine Laboratory Model Enforcement Program, providing a foundation on which other jurisdictions can design their own successful clandestine laboratory enforcement efforts. The program was created with BJA funding and is facilitated by Circle Solutions, Inc., an employee-owned company specializing in health and social services management consulting.

Key Program Elements

The strategic approach to creating a comprehensive, multiagency clandestine laboratory enforcement program calls for the following activities:

- Creation of a multiagency planning team to develop a strategic plan and coordinate roles and responsibilities of participating agencies. The team should include representatives from law enforcement, health care, hazardous materials (HAZMAT), environmental services, prosecution, and, in some cases, child protective agencies.

- ❑ Development of interagency agreements that address program purposes, goals, objectives, scope of authority, funding personnel, and media relations.
- ❑ Selection and training of personnel, including program coordinators, law enforcement officers, prosecutors, HAZMAT team members, firefighters, health department staff, and environmental personnel.
- ❑ Selection and required use of personal protective equipment.
- ❑ Establishment of procedures for regular medical screening and surveillance of enforcement program personnel and collection of related medical data.
- ❑ Development of a system to monitor the sale and distribution of the precursor chemicals that are essential to the production of methamphetamine.
- ❑ Development of policies and procedures for clandestine laboratory cleanup, disposal of contaminated materials, site remediation, and security.
- ❑ Development of community education and awareness programs that familiarize the general public with the warning signs and dangers of clandestine laboratories.

The successful implementation of a comprehensive enforcement program requires that all participants be committed to a multiagency approach to these activities.

Program Services

BJA makes training and technical support available for states and localities seeking to address problems related to clandestine drug laboratories. The training and technical support, which are delivered through BJA's grant-funded service provider Circle Solutions, Inc., emphasize a strategic approach to clandestine laboratory enforcement.

Training

Specialized training is available to public safety agencies that wish to implement comprehensive clandestine laboratory enforcement programs. Courses are usually held regionally with coordination through a cohost law enforcement agency. Expert instructors from law enforcement, HAZMAT, and environmental services agencies with extensive backgrounds in clandestine laboratory operations provide the training. Students are taught how to apply key elements of a comprehensive, multiagency approach and develop their own effective clandestine laboratory enforcement programs.

Three courses are offered on an ongoing, as-requested basis: Clandestine Drug Laboratory Enforcement, Managing a Clandestine Laboratory Program, and Strategic Planning for Clandestine Laboratory Enforcement. These courses can be customized to meet specific agency needs. For information on how to request a training program, see the For Further Information section at the end of this fact sheet.

Clandestine Drug Laboratory Enforcement

This 8-hour course prepares state and local law enforcement agencies to address the special problems they may encounter in dealing with clandestine laboratories. Through a series of lectures and case studies, participants learn about the dangers of clan labs and associated risks to personnel and the community. From an understanding of these issues, students become aware of the importance of a multiagency approach to enforcement and the components required for a comprehensive enforcement program. Topics include:

- ❑ Components of an effective clandestine laboratory enforcement program.
- ❑ Overview of clandestine laboratory hazards.
- ❑ Chemical processes and equipment used to produce methamphetamine.
- ❑ Clandestine laboratory identification and investigation.
- ❑ Suspect and user characteristics.
- ❑ Raid planning and execution.
- ❑ Hazard assessment, site control, and decontamination.

Managing a Clandestine Laboratory Enforcement Program

During this 16-hour program, law enforcement supervisors and managers learn how to plan and implement a coordinated response to clandestine laboratories. They gain an understanding of the critical importance of a multiagency approach to clandestine laboratory investigation and enforcement, as well as learn about the dangers that these laboratories pose to investigative personnel. Topics include:

- ❑ Current investigative issues in clandestine laboratory enforcement.
- ❑ Compliance with federal safety rules and regulations.

- ❑ Risk assessment, threat analysis, and hazards to personnel.
- ❑ Officer safety and liability issues.
- ❑ Raid planning and management.
- ❑ Site control and decontamination.
- ❑ Interagency cooperation and task force operations.
- ❑ Implementation of the components of an effective enforcement program.

Strategic Planning for Clandestine Laboratory Enforcement

This 16-hour course is designed specifically for upper-level managers from state and local law enforcement, fire fighting, emergency management services, HAZMAT, prosecutor's offices, environmental services, and health care agencies. Participants will work as a team to develop a strategic plan for a coordinated enforcement program. The training emphasizes the need for a multiagency approach to planning, implementing, and managing a community response to clandestine laboratories. Course topics include:

- ❑ Identifying components of a comprehensive enforcement program.
- ❑ Developing a strategic planning approach.
- ❑ Developing a mission statement.
- ❑ Selecting a program manager.
- ❑ Identifying funding sources and options.
- ❑ Writing policies and procedures.
- ❑ Selecting, training, and managing staff.
- ❑ Selecting personal protective equipment.
- ❑ Developing a health and safety plan.
- ❑ Formulating an evaluation strategy.

Technical Assistance

In addition to offering the three training courses, Circle Solutions, Inc., provides limited, no-cost, technical support to law enforcement agencies. Technical support is usually provided over the telephone, but it can also be

provided on site if necessary. Assistance is provided in policy and procedure development, strategic planning, referrals to expert personnel from BJA's program demonstration sites, and training program followup. For more information about technical support, see the For Further Information section.

Clandestine Laboratory Resource Publication

The BJA monograph *Developing a Strategy for a Multiagency Response to Clandestine Drug Laboratories* is designed to help state and local law enforcement officials plan, organize, and manage a comprehensive clandestine laboratory enforcement program. The publication is intended to complement existing training programs by providing information about the strategy planning process that allows the operational tasks to take place. To assist policymakers in formulating their own program components, this publication presents sample language from policies and procedures developed by BJA demonstration sites.

The monograph concludes with a list of sources for further information, including BJA demonstration sites, federal agencies, publications, training programs, and BJA contacts.

To obtain a copy of this monograph, contact the Bureau of Justice Assistance Clearinghouse at the address or telephone number listed in the For Further Information section.

Program Results

The BJA-funded Clandestine Laboratory Model Enforcement Program has proved successful by providing services that have increased awareness among law enforcement and other public safety agencies of the hazards and difficulties involved in investigating drug laboratories and of the need for intergovernmental coordination at all levels. In addition, these agencies have acquired a heightened awareness of federal laws pertaining to toxic waste cleanup.

For Further Information

For additional information about the training programs, including availability and registration information, or about obtaining technical support, contact:

Circle Solutions, Inc.

Suite 450
2070 Chain Bridge Road
Vienna, VA 22182
703-902-1225
E-mail: info@circsol.com
World Wide Web: www.circsol.com

For all other information, contact:

Bureau of Justice Assistance

National Programs Division
810 Seventh Street NW.
Washington, DC 20531
202-616-3458
World Wide Web: www.ojp.usdoj.gov/BJA

Bureau of Justice Assistance Clearinghouse

P.O. Box 6000
Rockville, MD 20849-6000
1-800-688-4252
World Wide Web: www.ncjrs.org

Clearinghouse staff are available Monday through Friday, 8:30 a.m. to 7 p.m. eastern time. Ask to be placed on the BJA mailing list.

U.S. Department of Justice Response Center

1-800-421-6770 or 202-307-1480

Response Center staff are available Monday through Friday, 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. eastern time.

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