



# Hawaii

## Drug Threat Assessment



National Drug Intelligence Center  
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# **Hawaii**

## **Drug Threat Assessment**

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## Preface

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This report is a strategic assessment that addresses the status and outlook of the drug threat to Hawaii. Analytical judgment determined the threat posed by each drug type or category, taking into account the most current quantitative and qualitative information on availability, demand, production or cultivation, transportation, and distribution, as well as the effects of a particular drug on abusers and society as a whole. While NDIC sought to incorporate the latest available information, a time lag often exists between collection and publication of data, particularly demand-related data sets. NDIC anticipates that this drug threat assessment will be useful to policymakers, law enforcement personnel, and treatment providers at the federal, state, and local levels because it draws upon a broad range of information sources to describe and analyze the drug threat to Hawaii.

# Hawaii Drug Threat Assessment

## Executive Summary

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The availability and abuse of crystal methamphetamine and high potency marijuana are the most serious drug threats to Hawaii. Mexican criminal groups dominate the transportation and wholesale distribution of methamphetamine in the state. Asian criminal groups transport some crystal methamphetamine from the West Coast and Asia and distribute it at the wholesale level. Street gangs, local independent dealers, and outlaw motorcycle gangs distribute methamphetamine at the retail level. Pacific Islander and other local independent dealers are the primary wholesale and retail distributors of marijuana throughout Hawaii. Mexican criminal groups dominate the transportation and wholesale distribution of heroin in the state. Street gangs are the primary retail distributors of heroin. Pacific Islander independent dealers along with Mexican criminal groups are the primary transporters of cocaine into the state, and they distribute the drug at the wholesale level. Pacific Islander independent dealers and street gangs dominate the conversion of powdered cocaine to crack and are the primary retail distributors of powdered cocaine and crack cocaine. The availability and abuse of other dangerous drugs such as MDMA, GHB, and LSD are limited. Pharmaceutical diversion and abuse are increasing.

**Methamphetamine**, particularly high purity crystal methamphetamine, also known as ice, poses the greatest drug threat to Hawaii. The number of treatment admissions for methamphetamine abuse more than doubled from 1994 through 2000. Honolulu had the highest percentage of adult male arrestees who tested positive for methamphetamine among cities reporting to the Arrestee Drug Abuse Monitoring program in 2000. Violence associated with the distribution and abuse of methamphetamine is a serious concern for law enforcement officials and healthcare professionals in Hawaii. Mexican criminal groups transport crystal and powdered methamphetamine from the West Coast to Hawaii and distribute the drug at the wholesale level. Local independent dealers convert some powdered methamphetamine transported into the islands to crystal methamphetamine and distribute it at the retail level. Asian criminal groups transport some crystal methamphetamine from the West Coast and Asia to Hawaii and distribute the drug at the wholesale level. Mexican and Asian criminal groups transport methamphetamine typically using couriers on commercial flights or via package delivery services. Street gangs, local independent dealers, and outlaw motorcycle gangs distribute methamphetamine at the retail level.

**Marijuana**, the second most significant drug threat to the state, is widely available and frequently abused in Hawaii, especially by teenagers. Most marijuana available in Hawaii is produced locally. The state consistently ranks among the top five in the number of cannabis plants eradicated. Cannabis grown outdoors in Hawaii contains some of the highest THC levels in the nation because of the optimal growing conditions, nutrient- and mineral-rich volcanic soil, and advances in hybridization techniques. Local independent growers, primarily Pacific Islanders, cultivate cannabis outdoors year-round. Local independent dealers and, to a lesser extent, Mexican criminal groups transport Hawaii-produced marijuana to the West Coast, primarily California, as well as to Canada and Mexico. Local independent dealers also transport Canada-produced marijuana from the West Coast into Hawaii, and they distribute the drug at the wholesale level. Pacific Islander and other local independent dealers are the primary wholesale and retail distributors of marijuana throughout Hawaii.

The availability, distribution, and abuse of **heroin** continue to present a threat to Hawaii. Heroin is widely available and abuse of the drug continues to increase. Mexican black tar is the most common type of heroin available in the state. The availability of Southeast Asian heroin, which dominated the Hawaii heroin market in the 1970s and 1980s, is very limited. Mexican criminal groups and, to a much lesser extent, Asian criminal groups transport heroin from the West Coast to Hawaii using couriers on commercial flights or via package delivery services. Mexican criminal groups dominate distribution at the wholesale level, while street gangs dominate retail distribution.

The abuse of **cocaine**, particularly crack, is decreasing but remains a threat to the state. Pacific Islander independent dealers and Mexican criminal groups in Hawaii transport most of the cocaine into the state from the West Coast, typically using couriers on commercial flights or via package delivery services. These same independent dealers and criminal groups dominate the wholesale distribution of powdered cocaine in Hawaii. Pacific Islander independent dealers and Samoan and Tongan street gangs are the primary retail distributors of powdered cocaine and crack cocaine.

The **other dangerous drugs** (ODDs) category includes club drugs and diverted pharmaceuticals. Currently, the threat posed by club drugs such as MDMA, GHB, and LSD is limited. However, MDMA abuse is increasing in Hawaii. Club drugs are used primarily by teens and young adults at all-night dance parties called raves. The abuse of diverted pharmaceuticals such as OxyContin is increasing in Hawaii. There is no evidence to suggest that ODDs contribute to violence in the state and, with the exception of a few isolated incidents, ODDs are not produced in Hawaii. Couriers carrying false-bottom luggage and traveling on commercial flights typically transport ODDs. Package delivery services also are used to transport ODDs. Caucasian criminal groups and local independent dealers are the primary wholesale and retail distributors of ODDs in Hawaii.

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*Hawaii.*

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# Hawaii

## Drug Threat Assessment

### Overview

Hawaii comprises eight main islands and a 1,500-mile chain of islets covering more than 6,400 square miles. The islands include Hawaii, Kahoolawe, Kauai, Lanai, Maui, Molokai, Niihau, and Oahu. The island of Oahu and the city of Honolulu—the major drug transportation hub in the state—are the focal points for the flow of drugs into the islands. Honolulu, the state capital, is located on the most populated island of Oahu. Honolulu has more than 377,000 residents—nearly 10 times the population of Hilo or Kailua, the next largest cities. Hawaii has approximately 1.2 million residents and ranks forty-second in population. It has the most racially diverse population of any state. Asians account for 41.6 percent of the population, while Caucasians represent 24.3 percent of the population, the lowest percentage of any state. Native Hawaiians account for 9.4 percent; Hispanics, 7.2 percent; and African Americans, 1.8 percent. The remaining 15.7 percent is mixed race. The term Pacific Islander refers to Native Hawaiians, Samoans, Tongans, and individuals from other islands located in the Pacific Basin or those descended from a combination of two or more of these groups. The Pacific Basin includes Hawaii, Guam, China, and Japan, among others.

Hawaii depends on commercial maritime imports for an estimated 80 percent of its

Fast Facts	
Hawaii	
Population (2000)	1,211,537
U.S. population ranking (2000)	42nd
Median household income (2000)	\$43,627
Unemployment rate (2000)	4.3%
Land area	6,423 square miles
Capital	Honolulu
Other principal cities	Hilo, Kailua, Kaneohe
Number of counties	4
Principal industries	Agriculture and tourism

consumer goods. The Harbors Division of the Department of Transportation has jurisdiction over 10 harbors: Honolulu, Kalaeloa Barbers Point, and Kewalo Basin in the Oahu District; Nawiliwili and Port Allen in the Kauai District; Kahului, Kaunapau, and Kaunakakai in the Maui District; and Hilo and Kawaihae in the Hawaii District. The port of Honolulu is the sixteenth largest port in the United States; it handled



approximately 411,000 TEUs (twenty-foot equivalent units) of container traffic in 1999. Over half of the cargo shipped through Hawaii transits Honolulu, which is the principal port of entry for food products and manufactured goods. Most food products imported into the state originate in New Zealand, the Netherlands, and Japan, while most manufactured goods originate in Japan, Hong Kong, and Taiwan. Although there is no regularly scheduled maritime passenger service between the U.S. mainland and Hawaii, various cargo lines provide passage from the West Coast. The most common departure points are Los Angeles and San Francisco. Hawaii's reliance on imported consumer goods makes it vulnerable to the maritime transportation of drugs into the state.

Air service is the most common means of access to the state. Direct airline service to Hawaii is available on regularly scheduled flights from the West Coast and from most major U.S. cities. Honolulu, Hilo, and Kona at Keahole are Hawaii's three international airports. The Honolulu International Airport, the state's largest, is a port of entry for passengers as well as for air cargo and package delivery services. The Honolulu-Maui and Honolulu-Kauai air routes rank among the 10 busiest in the United States in terms of commercial traffic. Since interdiction efforts are focused primarily at the Honolulu International Airport, drugs sometimes are transported to the other islands in the state, then flown to Oahu using local airlines that offer express flights between islands. Law enforcement authorities estimate that 90 percent of all drugs seized in Hawaii are transported to the state using couriers on commercial flights that originate on the West Coast, primarily California, or via package delivery services.

Hawaii's three principal highways—all located on Oahu—are H1, H2, and H3. The main route to Honolulu from Barbers Point Naval Air Station, located on the southern coast of Oahu, is H1. It extends from Barbers Point Naval Air

Station, passes Pearl Harbor where it connects with H2 in central Oahu near Pearl City, and traverses southeast toward the capital. Kailua and Kaneohe are connected to Pearl City via H3. These highways are used to transport drugs throughout Oahu.

Hawaii is a transshipment point for methamphetamine destined for the Pacific Basin from the West Coast and is a source of supply of marijuana for cities in the continental United States. Because of the high volume of drugs transported into and through the state, Hawaii was designated a High Intensity Drug Trafficking Area (HIDTA) in fiscal year (FY) 1999.

In Hawaii there are more than 140 street gangs with over 1,500 members. Most gang-related crime is attributed to Filipino, Hispanic, Native Hawaiian, Samoan, and Tongan street gangs. These gangs distribute most drugs at the retail level throughout Hawaii. Hispanic street gang activity is increasing. Some street gang members have relocated from Los Angeles and San Francisco to Hawaii, particularly Honolulu.

Drug abuse is a serious concern in Hawaii. According to the 1999 National Household Survey on Drug Abuse (NHSDA), 6.7 percent of the respondents aged 12 and older in Hawaii reported using any drug in the past month. Nationally 6.3 percent of respondents reported past month drug abuse. According to the Treatment Episode Data Set (TEDS), the total number of treatment admissions for drug and alcohol abuse in Hawaii increased over 50 percent from 1994 through 1999. During the same period, the number of treatment admissions for drug and alcohol abuse remained stable nationwide.

Per capita spending on substance abuse in Hawaii is significant. The National Center on Addiction and Substance Abuse (CASA) at Columbia University reported that Hawaii spent \$368 per resident in 1998 on substance abuse-related services, ranking the state seventh in the nation including Washington, D.C., and

Puerto Rico. That same year Hawaii spent \$430 million of its annual budget (8.6 percent) on substance abuse-related programs that focused on

justice, education, health, child/family assistance, mental health/developmental disabilities, public safety, and the state workforce.

## Methamphetamine

Methamphetamine, particularly high purity crystal methamphetamine also known as ice, poses the greatest drug threat to Hawaii. The number of treatment admissions for methamphetamine abuse more than doubled from 1994 through 2000. Honolulu had the highest percentage of adult male arrestees who tested positive for methamphetamine among cities reporting to the Arrestee Drug Abuse Monitoring (ADAM) program in 2000. Violence associated with the distribution and abuse of methamphetamine is a serious concern for law enforcement officials and health-care professionals in Hawaii. Mexican criminal groups transport crystal and powdered methamphetamine from the West Coast into Hawaii and distribute the drug at the wholesale level. Local independent dealers convert some powdered methamphetamine transported into the islands to

crystal methamphetamine and distribute it at the retail level. Asian criminal groups transport some crystal methamphetamine from the West Coast and Asia into Hawaii and distribute the drug at the wholesale level. Mexican and Asian criminal groups transport methamphetamine typically using couriers on commercial flights or via package delivery services. Street gangs, local independent dealers, and outlaw motorcycle gangs (OMGs) distribute methamphetamine at the retail level.

### Crystal Methamphetamine

Crystal methamphetamine is a colorless, odorless, smokable form of d-methamphetamine resembling glass fragments or ice shavings.

## Abuse

Methamphetamine abuse is a significant problem in Hawaii, particularly in several communities on Oahu, including Ewa Beach, Kalihi, Waianae, and Waipahu. Abusers prefer high purity—averaging over 90 percent—crystal methamphetamine, which is smoked in glass pipes. Powdered methamphetamine is not commonly abused in Hawaii.

Admissions to publicly funded treatment facilities for methamphetamine abuse are increasing in Hawaii. According to TEDS, admissions for methamphetamine abuse increased overall from 644 in 1994 to 1,548 in 2000. (See Table 1 on page 4.) Those admitted to treatment for methamphetamine abuse accounted for 17.0 percent of all admissions in 1994 compared with 27.3 percent in 2000, when 73.8 percent were aged 21 to 40, and 8.5 percent were 17 or younger. However, many abusers who seek treatment are not admitted

because most state-funded treatment programs are operating at maximum capacity.

Lifetime methamphetamine abuse remained stable at low levels among the adult population in Hawaii from 1995 to 1998 but increased among young adult males. According to the Center for Substance Abuse Treatment, during that time-frame the number of treatment admissions to publicly funded facilities for methamphetamine abuse increased among Caucasians, Japanese Americans, and Native Hawaiians, while the number of admissions decreased among Filipinos. Less than 1 percent of all adult respondents in Hawaii reported lifetime methamphetamine abuse, according to the 1995 and 1998 Center for Substance Abuse Treatment surveys. Of that 1 percent, abuse among males aged 18 to 24 increased from 1.4 percent of respondents in 1995 to 6.1 percent in 1998.

**Table 1. Methamphetamine-Related Treatment Admissions to Publicly Funded Facilities Hawaii, 1994–2000**

Year	Admissions
1994	644
1995	1,040
1996	944
1997	1,175
1998	1,243
1999	1,417
2000	1,548

Source: U. S. Department of Health and Human Services, Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, Treatment Episode Data Set.

Data from ADAM indicate that methamphetamine abuse among adult male arrestees is a serious problem in Hawaii. In 2000 Honolulu had the highest percentage of adult male arrestees who tested positive for methamphetamine abuse—nearly 36 percent—among cities reporting to the ADAM program.

Despite the significance of the methamphetamine problem among the adult population, Hawaii school age youths have lower rates of lifetime methamphetamine abuse than youths nationwide. According to the 2000 Hawaii Student Alcohol, Tobacco, and Other Drug Use Study, 2 percent of eighth grade, 5 percent of tenth grade, and 6 percent of twelfth grade students reported lifetime methamphetamine abuse. According to the Hawaii study, 4 percent of eighth grade, 7 percent of tenth grade, and 8 percent of twelfth grade students nationwide reported lifetime methamphetamine abuse. According to the 1999 Youth Risk Behavior Survey (YRBS), 7.7 percent of high school students in Hawaii reported lifetime methamphetamine abuse compared with 9.1 percent of high school students nationwide.

## Availability

Methamphetamine is readily available in most areas of Hawaii. Mexico-produced methamphetamine is most readily available; however, methamphetamine produced in California and, to a lesser extent, methamphetamine produced in Asia and locally produced methamphetamine also are available. Two types of methamphetamine are available in Hawaii—crystal and powdered. High purity crystal methamphetamine is the most prevalent form available. Two primary types of crystal methamphetamine are available. The first type is known as clear, which is white and highly refined. The second type is known as wash, which is brown, less highly refined, and has been washed using acetone and alcohol to improve its appearance.

Decreasing prices for methamphetamine in Hawaii may indicate increased availability. The

price of crystal methamphetamine peaked at \$10,000 per ounce in 1997 and decreased to \$2,500 to \$3,000 per ounce in 2000. During that year a gram of crystal methamphetamine—which provides about 30 doses—sold for \$200 to \$300 in Honolulu, \$250 in Hawaii County, \$300 to \$500 in Maui County, and \$500 in Kauai County. Throughout the state crystal methamphetamine sold for \$28,000 to \$35,000 per pound in 2000.

In Hawaii the percentage of methamphetamine-related federal sentences was significantly higher than the national percentage. According to U.S. Sentencing Commission data, over 44.6 percent of drug-related federal sentences in Hawaii in FY2000 were methamphetamine-related compared with 14.5 percent nationwide. The number of methamphetamine-related federal sentences was

higher than the number of sentences for any other drug in the state in FY2000. Hawaii had 69 methamphetamine-related federal sentences in

FY1996, 53 in FY1997, 67 in FY1998, 81 in FY1999, and 66 in FY2000.

## Violence

Methamphetamine-related violence is a concern to law enforcement officials and public health professionals. Methamphetamine abusers tend to be violent and can endanger themselves and those around them. As the euphoric effects of methamphetamine begin to diminish, abusers enter a stage called tweaking in which they are prone to violence, delusions, and paranoia. Many abusers try to buffer the effects of the methamphetamine "crash" with other drugs such as cocaine or heroin. These effects, in combination with severe sleep deprivation, can result in unpredictable and uncontrollable behavior.

### Tweaking

During the tweaking stage, the methamphetamine abuser often has not slept for days and, consequently, is extremely irritable. The tweaker also craves more methamphetamine, which results in frustration and contributes to anxiety and restlessness. In this stage, the abuser may become violent without provocation. Case histories indicate that tweakers have become antagonized at the mere sight of a police uniform.

Methamphetamine producers and abusers sometimes commit violent crimes in Hawaii, including an alarming number of domestic crimes ranging from child neglect to homicide. The paranoia that accompanies methamphetamine abuse has caused many abusers to assault and even kill

family members, including children. The Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA) reports that domestic violence incidents, to include child abuse, often have a nexus to crystal methamphetamine use. Methamphetamine abuse also has been associated with several incidents of violence involving hostages.

### Murder and Attempted Murder Charges Filed

In September 2000 a Kauai man who told police that he used crystal methamphetamine along with several other drugs was accused of fatally shooting a neighbor and attempting to murder a homeless man. The accused man told police he was protecting his family from drug dealers and neighbors who he believed were spying on him.

Source: *Associated Press*, 21 September 2000.

### Autopsy Shows Man in Police Standoff Had Taken Crystal Methamphetamine

In January 2000 a crystal methamphetamine user held a woman hostage for 4 hours before he committed suicide, following a standoff with police. Toxicology tests indicated the man had used crystal methamphetamine in the 24 hours preceding the incident. He had escaped from a halfway house in December after refusing a random drug test.

Source: Honolulu Police Department.

## Production

Local independent operators produce small quantities of powdered methamphetamine in Hawaii, but most is transported to Hawaii by

Mexican criminal groups. Local independent dealers also convert powdered methamphetamine into crystal methamphetamine, primarily on

Hawaii, Kauai, Molokai, and Oahu. Conversion laboratories were first found on Oahu in 1996; since 1998 Hawaii law enforcement authorities have seized both conversion and production laboratories.

**Conversion to Crystal Methamphetamine**

The conversion of powdered methamphetamine to crystal methamphetamine involves dissolving d-methamphetamine powder in a solvent such as denatured alcohol. Evaporation of the solvent causes large crystals to form around the edge of the container. Typically, the crystals are removed and dried on a paper towel. If the solution is evaporated at room temperature, the crystals will be large. However, if the solution is evaporated in a refrigerator, the crystals will be small; if a freezer is used, the crystals will be even smaller.

Law enforcement officers seized the first production laboratory on the island of Hawaii in 1998 and another on Maui in late 1999. During 2000 state and local law enforcement officers in Honolulu seized seven methamphetamine laboratories; six were conversion laboratories and one was a production laboratory. The hydriodic acid/red phosphorus method was used in the seized production laboratory. Officers also recovered more than 200 milliliters of liquid methamphetamine and

located a chemical dumpsite at the eastern end of Oahu. At the dumpsite, officers discovered seven large trash bags that contained empty pseudoephedrine tablet boxes, matchbooks without the striker pads, and empty 1-gallon acetone and toluene containers, all used in the production of methamphetamine. In separate investigations during 2001, law enforcement officers seized two production laboratories on the island of Oahu.

**Third Methamphetamine Laboratory Hit**

During a 1-week period in September 2000, Honolulu police officers raided one production and two conversion laboratories, resulting in six arrests. Law enforcement officials discovered precursor and essential chemicals including iodine crystals, ephedrine, acetone, and denatured alcohol at the laboratory sites.

Source: *Associated Press*, 28 September 2000.

**Hydriodic Acid/Red Phosphorus Methamphetamine Production Method**

The principal chemicals required are ephedrine or pseudoephedrine, hydriodic acid, and red phosphorus. This method can yield multi-pound quantities of high quality d-methamphetamine and often is associated with Mexican drug trafficking organizations.

**Transportation**

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Mexican criminal groups have replaced traditional Asian criminal groups as the primary transporters of methamphetamine. Mexican criminal groups are the primary transporters of Mexico-produced methamphetamine as well as methamphetamine produced in California. Law enforcement officials report that Mexican criminal groups transport methamphetamine into Hawaii from the West Coast, primarily California.

Mexican criminal groups transport both powdered and crystal methamphetamine. Some powdered methamphetamine is converted to crystal methamphetamine in Mexico and on the West Coast for transportation to Hawaii.

Traditional Asian transporters of crystal methamphetamine—primarily Korean, Japanese, Filipino, and Vietnamese criminal groups—also transport the drug into Hawaii, but to a lesser



extent than during the mid-1980s to early 1990s. In the early 1990s law enforcement authorities in Hawaii dismantled several large Asian, primarily Korean, criminal groups that dominated the transportation of crystal methamphetamine into Hawaii from Asia. These groups continue to transport some crystal methamphetamine into Hawaii from the West Coast and from source countries including Korea and Thailand. Hawaii is also a transshipment point for methamphetamine transported by Asian criminal groups from the West Coast to the Pacific Basin, primarily Guam.

Most methamphetamine is transported into Hawaii on commercial flights by courier or package delivery service. Many of the flights originate from the West Coast, primarily California. According to 2000 Operation Jetway statistics, in Hawaii there were eight seizures of crystal methamphetamine totaling slightly more than 11 kilograms and seven seizures of powdered methamphetamine totaling nearly 11 kilograms. All of the methamphetamine was transported from California by courier or package delivery service. Each courier typically carried about 100 grams of methamphetamine taped to the body or hidden in luggage. Packages usually contained larger quantities.

#### **Operation Jetway**

Operation Jetway is a domestic interdiction program supported by the El Paso Intelligence Center (EPIC). It operates across the nation at airports, train stations, bus stations, package shipment facilities, U.S. Post Offices, and airport hotels and motels.

The Honolulu International Airport is the primary port of entry for methamphetamine transported into Hawaii. Approximately 90 percent of the methamphetamine seized in Hawaii is transported into the state via the Honolulu International Airport. According to the Hawaii HIDTA Task Force, there were more than 21 kilograms of crystal methamphetamine seized at the Honolulu International Airport between July 1999 and June 2000.

#### **Methamphetamine Seizures**

In March 2000 Honolulu Operation Jetway Task Force officers seized 728 grams of crystal methamphetamine and arrested two male residents of Honolulu and one male resident of Redondo Beach, California. Two of the suspects had traveled together from Los Angeles; the other had traveled separately on an earlier flight.

In May 1998 Honolulu Operation Jetway Task Force officers seized 1,230 grams of crystal methamphetamine from a Caucasian male resident of Salem, Oregon, traveling from Los Angeles, California, to Honolulu. The methamphetamine was concealed in the suspect's carry-on luggage inside a detergent box.

In late 1997 Los Angeles Operation Jetway Task Force officers seized 3 kilograms of methamphetamine from two Hispanic females traveling from Los Angeles to Guam via Honolulu. The suspects concealed the drugs in their checked luggage.

Source: EPIC.

## **Distribution**

Mexican criminal groups and, to a lesser extent, Asian criminal groups distribute methamphetamine at the wholesale level in Hawaii. Since the mid-1990s Mexican criminal groups have dominated the wholesale distribution of crystal

and powdered methamphetamine in the state. Historically, Asian criminal groups had controlled wholesale distribution of crystal methamphetamine in Hawaii. Mexican criminal groups became dominant following successful law

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enforcement investigations conducted in the early 1990s that targeted Asian criminal groups operating in Hawaii. According to law enforcement officials, Asian criminal groups and local independent dealers transport wholesale quantities of methamphetamine from Honolulu to Kauai for retail distribution. Both Mexican and Asian criminal groups continue to supply methamphetamine to retail distributors in Hawaii.

Street gangs, local independent dealers, and OMGs distribute methamphetamine at the retail level in Hawaii. Retail distributors use pagers and cellular telephones when distributing methamphetamine. Methamphetamine sold at the retail level frequently is packaged in plastic bags.

Retail distribution of methamphetamine occurs throughout Honolulu primarily in the downtown area in nightclubs or on street corners and from houses in residential communities.

**Kailua Couple Accused of Selling Drugs From Home**

In December 2000 an undercover police investigation led to the arrest of a Kailua man and woman who allegedly sold crystal methamphetamine from their home. Police reportedly discovered more than 15 grams of methamphetamine and over \$700 during a search of the suspects' home.

Source: Honolulu Police Department.

**Marijuana**

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Marijuana, the second most significant drug threat to the state, is widely available and frequently abused in Hawaii, especially by teenagers. Most marijuana available in Hawaii is produced locally. The state consistently ranks among the top five in the number of cannabis plants eradicated. Cannabis grown outdoors in Hawaii contains some of the highest THC (tetrahydrocannabinol) levels in the nation because of the optimal growing conditions, nutrient- and mineral-rich volcanic soil, and advances in hybridization techniques. Local independent

growers, primarily Pacific Islanders, cultivate cannabis outdoors year-round. Local independent dealers and, to a lesser extent, Mexican criminal groups transport Hawaii-produced marijuana to the West Coast, primarily California, as well as to Canada and Mexico. Local independent dealers also transport Canada-produced marijuana from the West Coast into Hawaii, and they distribute the drug at the wholesale level. Pacific Islander and other local independent dealers are the primary wholesale and retail distributors of marijuana throughout Hawaii.

**Abuse**

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Abuse of marijuana is widespread and continues to increase in Hawaii. According to a Center for Substance Abuse Treatment survey, lifetime abuse of marijuana by adult Hawaiian respondents increased from 28.9 percent in 1991 to 38.1 percent in 1998. From 1991 through 1998 abuse among males increased from 34.8 percent to 44.8 percent and among females from 23.9 percent to 31.7 percent. During the same period, marijuana abuse increased slightly among Caucasians and

Filipinos and decreased slightly among Japanese Americans.

The number of admissions for marijuana abuse fluctuated in Hawaii between 1994 and 2000. TEDS data indicate that admissions to publicly funded treatment facilities for marijuana abuse increased from 589 in 1994 to a peak of 1,257 in 1999 then decreased to 1,150 in 2000. According to 2000 TEDS data, admissions to

publicly funded treatment facilities for marijuana abuse accounted for 20.3 percent of all treatment admissions in Hawaii. Individuals 17 years or younger accounted for 69.8 percent of treatment admissions for marijuana abuse. Healthcare professionals indicate that the high rate of juvenile admissions is attributed to the addictive properties of the potent marijuana available in Hawaii. In 2000 admissions for marijuana abuse were second only to the number of admissions for methamphetamine.

Fewer adult male arrestees in Honolulu tested positive for marijuana abuse than for methamphetamine abuse. ADAM data indicate that more than 30 percent of adult male arrestees in Honolulu tested positive for marijuana abuse

in 2000; 36 percent of adult male arrestees tested positive for methamphetamine abuse.

Marijuana abuse is prevalent among juveniles in Hawaii. The 2000 Hawaii Student Alcohol, Tobacco, and Other Drug Use Study indicates that lifetime prevalence of marijuana abuse among tenth grade students increased from 25.7 percent in 1991 to 39.2 percent in 1998, but decreased to 33.2 percent in 2000. The data indicate the same trend among twelfth grade students; abuse increased from 34.3 in 1993 to 47.7 percent in 1998 and decreased to 45.8 percent in 2000. According to the 1999 YRBS, 44.6 percent of Hawaii high school students reported lifetime marijuana abuse compared with 47.2 percent of high school students nationally.

## Availability

High potency cannabis is widely cultivated and readily available in Hawaii. Cannabis grown outdoors in Hawaii contains some of the highest THC levels in the nation. High quality marijuana smuggled from Canada also is available in Hawaii. According to the National Institute on Drug Abuse Marijuana Potency Monitoring Program, the average THC level of samples from Hawaii has decreased from 11.9 percent in 1998 and 11.1 percent in 1999 to 6.2 percent in 2000. Despite this decrease, cannabis cultivated in Hawaii still yields marijuana with THC levels that exceed the national average (4.92%).

### Source of Marijuana Potency Data

The primary source of marijuana potency data for the United States is the National Institute on Drug Abuse Marijuana Potency Monitoring Program, a project based at the University of Mississippi at Oxford. The program measures the amount of THC from samples provided by federal, state, and local law enforcement agencies.

1992 to 2000. Wholesale quantities of marijuana sold for \$400 to \$800 per ounce in 1992 and \$450 to \$650 in 2000. Retail quantities of marijuana sold for \$100 per one-eighth ounce between 1992 and 2000.

The percentage of marijuana-related federal sentences in Hawaii was approximately one-fourth the national percentage in FY2000. According to U.S. Sentencing Commission data, 8.1 percent of drug-related federal sentences in Hawaii in FY2000 were marijuana-related compared with 31.2 percent nationwide. Each year from FY1997 through FY2000, there were fewer federal drug-related sentences for marijuana than for methamphetamine, heroin, or cocaine. Hawaii had 9 marijuana-related federal sentences in FY1996, 7 in FY1997, 9 in FY1998, 14 in FY1999, and 12 in FY2000.

Marijuana prices indicate that availability remains stable in Hawaii. Wholesale and retail prices for marijuana were relatively constant from



## Violence

Violence generally is not associated with marijuana distribution or abuse in Hawaii. However, officers with the Hawaii County Police

Department occasionally encounter growers who employ violent measures to protect their cultivation operations.

## Production

Agricultural and economic conditions in Hawaii are optimal for cannabis cultivation. Cannabis grown outdoors in Hawaii contains some of the highest THC in the nation because of optimal growing conditions, the nutrient- and mineral-rich volcanic soil, and advances in hybridization techniques. Cannabis cultivators can produce at least two crops per year in Hawaii. Cannabis cultivation and the production of marijuana have become more prevalent in the wake of sugarcane plantation closings that have resulted in a depressed local economy.

Cannabis is grown primarily outdoors in Hawaii by Pacific Islander and other local independent cultivators. The size of outdoor cannabis plots varies widely, from as few as five plants to as many as several thousand. Growers often use federal and state land for cannabis cultivation to avoid having their personal property seized. The Department of Land and Natural Resources estimates that 70 to 80 percent of cannabis cultivation in Hawaii occurs on government land, approximately 10 percent on company land previously planted with sugarcane, and the remainder on private land. Growers often cultivate small cannabis plots in remote mountainous areas, making it difficult for law enforcement authorities to locate and eradicate the plants. In 1999 state law enforcement authorities discovered a new cannabis hybrid on the slopes of Mauna Loa on the island of Hawaii. This particular hybrid is difficult to detect from the air.

### 74-Year-Old Man Arrested in Raid

In August 2001 Hawaii County police officers arrested a 74-year-old man for production of marijuana. Authorities seized 756 cannabis plants ranging from seedlings to plants as tall as 6 feet, as well as 5.2 pounds of processed marijuana and 9.2 ounces of cannabis seeds at his residence in Kailua Kona.

Source: Hawaii County Police Department.

Although cannabis is cultivated throughout the state, most cannabis cultivation sites are located on the island of Hawaii. More than 80 percent of the plants eradicated in the state in 1999 were on the island of Hawaii. Cannabis also is cultivated on Kauai, Maui, and Molokai.

### Appeals Court Rejects Challenge to Big Isle Marijuana Search

A federal appeals court rejected a Hawaii man's challenge to the April 1999 search of his home during which police found 2,400 cannabis plants and more than 3 pounds of dried marijuana. Police seized the cannabis plants and marijuana after officers in a helicopter noticed the distinct color of cannabis plants through the home's translucent plastic roof.

Source: *Associated Press*, 10 January 2001.

In 1999 and 2000 Hawaii ranked second to California in the total number of cannabis plants eradicated, according to DEA's Domestic Cannabis Eradication/Suppression Program statistical report. Hawaii has ranked among the top five states in the number of cannabis plants eradicated

since 1995. According to DEA, California, Hawaii, Kentucky, and Tennessee had the highest numbers of cannabis plants eradicated in 2000; these four states accounted for 78 percent of all cannabis plants eradicated in the United States. On average, from 1995 to 1999 approximately

650,000 plants were eradicated each year in Hawaii. During 2000 law enforcement agencies eradicated fewer than 467,000 plants because Hawaii County did not participate in statewide eradication efforts.

## Transportation

Although most of the marijuana available in Hawaii is produced locally, some is smuggled into the state. Occasionally, BC Bud—a highly potent type of marijuana produced in Canada—is smuggled to the continental United States from Vancouver and Quebec and transported to Hawaii. Canada-produced marijuana typically is smuggled across the U.S.–Canada border via commercial truck, private vehicle, or courier; however, there have been incidents of BC Bud being smuggled directly from Canada into Hawaii. According to 2000 Operation Jetway statistics, there were four seizures of marijuana in Hawaii totaling just over 6 kilograms; two of the shipments seized originated in California, and the sources of the other two were unidentified. Marijuana is transported from island to island within the state by courier and package delivery service.

Some locally produced marijuana is transported from Hawaii to the West Coast, primarily California, and to Canada and Mexico by local independent dealers and, to a lesser extent, Mexican criminal groups. These dealers and groups often

exchange marijuana for methamphetamine or cocaine in the continental United States.

### Two Men Caught in Federal Marijuana Bust

In March 2000 law enforcement officials apprehended two men attempting to smuggle 22 pounds of BC Bud to Honolulu from Vancouver, British Columbia. The men delivered approximately 4 pounds of marijuana in exchange for \$20,000.

Source: Hawaii HIDTA Airport Task Force.

### Marijuana Seized From Parcels

In March 2000 Honolulu Operation Jetway Task Force officers seized 5 kilograms of marijuana from two packages destined for Honolulu from Los Angeles via a package delivery service. Controlled deliveries of the parcels resulted in three arrests.

Source: EPIC.

## Distribution

Pacific Islander and other local independent dealers are the primary wholesale and retail marijuana distributors in Hawaii, according to Honolulu Police Department authorities. However, when compared with all other drug distribution networks, wholesale marijuana distribution is the least organized. Anyone with access to the seeds and a cultivation site can become a producer and

distributor. Locally produced marijuana typically is transported by local independent dealers to Oahu for distribution. It is transported in multi-ounce to multipound quantities on commercial flights from Hawaii, Maui, Molokai, and Kauai. Local independent dealers also distribute BC Bud in Hawaii.

## Heroin

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The availability, distribution, and abuse of heroin continue to present a threat to Hawaii. Heroin is widely available, and abuse of the drug continues to increase. Mexican black tar is the most common type of heroin available in the state. The availability of Southeast Asian heroin, which dominated the Hawaii heroin market in the 1970s and 1980s, is very limited. Mexican

criminal groups and, to a much lesser extent, Asian criminal groups transport heroin from the West Coast to Hawaii using couriers on commercial flights or via package delivery services. Mexican criminal groups dominate distribution at the wholesale level, while street gangs dominate retail distribution.

## Abuse

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The number of admissions to publicly funded treatment facilities for heroin abuse fluctuated between 1994 and 2000. According to TEDS data, admissions for treatment of heroin abuse fluctuated from 209 in 1994 to a high of 434 admissions in 1998. Admissions then decreased to 313 in 2000, according to TEDS.

Heroin abuse has increased among adults in Hawaii. According to the Center for Substance Abuse Treatment, the number of adults who abused heroin increased from 2,660 in 1995 to 8,100 in 1998. Two-thirds of these abusers reported frequent abuse—more than one or two times in 18 months. Reported lifetime heroin abuse increased from 0.3 percent in 1995 to 0.9 percent in 1998. Heroin abuse among males increased from 0.1 percent in 1995 to 0.6 percent in 1998, while abuse among females increased from 0.1 percent in 1995 to 0.5 percent in 1998.

Fewer adult male arrestees in Honolulu tested positive for heroin than for methamphetamine. ADAM data indicate that nearly 7 percent of adult male arrestees tested positive for heroin abuse in 2000; 36 percent tested positive for methamphetamine.

Rates of heroin abuse by school age youths in Hawaii are declining and are comparable to national rates. The 2000 Hawaii Student Alcohol, Tobacco, and Other Drug Use Study indicates that lifetime heroin abuse among tenth grade students decreased overall from 4.1 percent in 1993 to 1.3 percent in 2000. Lifetime heroin abuse among twelfth grade students also decreased from 5.1 percent in 1993 to 1.8 percent in 2000. According to the 1999 YRBS, 2.3 percent of Hawaii high school students reported lifetime heroin abuse compared with 2.4 percent of high school students nationally.

## Availability

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Heroin is increasingly available in Hawaii. Mexican black tar is the most prevalent form of heroin and is widely available. Southeast Asian heroin was common in Hawaii during the 1970s and 1980s but currently is available only in very limited quantities.

### **Big Isle Police Seize 4 Pounds of Heroin in Fern Forest Drug Bust**

In March 2001 federal, state, and local law enforcement authorities seized 4 pounds of heroin during a raid on a home in Puna (near Hilo on the island of Hawaii). Two Mexican nationals were arrested, and the Immigration and Naturalization Service detained two other Mexican nationals. Agents also seized 12 grams of cocaine, various drug paraphernalia related to heroin distribution, and \$2,600.

Source: HIDTA Task Force.

In Hawaii heroin prices, like other drug prices, were significantly higher than on the mainland. In 2000 Mexican black tar heroin sold for \$150 to \$300 per gram in Hawaii. In comparison, Mexican black tar heroin sold for

\$80 to \$100 per gram in Los Angeles, California, a major distribution hub. Mexican black tar heroin sold for \$3,000 per ounce in Hawaii, compared with \$850 to \$1,000 per ounce in Los Angeles.

Decreasing heroin prices indicate that heroin is increasingly available in Hawaii. The price of wholesale and retail quantities of heroin decreased significantly from 1992 to 2000. Wholesale quantities of Mexican black tar heroin sold for \$8,000 per ounce in 1992 and \$3,000 per ounce in 2000, while retail heroin prices were \$600 per gram in 1992 and \$150 to \$300 per gram in 2000. Retail heroin purity in Hawaii ranged from 50 to 75 percent, according to DEA.

The number of heroin-related federal drug sentences in Hawaii fluctuated between FY1996 and FY2000. According to U.S. Sentencing Commission data, Hawaii had 9 heroin-related federal sentences in FY1996, 6 in FY1997, 11 in FY1998, 26 in FY1999, and 15 in FY2000. Additionally, 10.1 percent of all federal drug-related sentences in Hawaii were heroin-related in FY2000 compared with 7.7 percent nationwide.

## Violence

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There have been reports of violence associated with heroin distribution and abuse in Hawaii, but such reports are generally limited. Heroin abusers

typically are nonviolent, but some commit burglary or robbery to support their addiction.

## Production

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Opium is not cultivated nor is heroin refined in Hawaii. The four main source regions for heroin are South America, Southeast Asia, Southwest

Asia, and Mexico. The heroin available in Hawaii generally is produced in Mexico and, to a much lesser extent, Southeast Asia.

## Transportation

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Mexican criminal groups and, to a much lesser extent, Asian criminal groups transport heroin into Hawaii, which is also a transshipment point for heroin from the West Coast to other Pacific Basin locations. Mexican criminal groups transport heroin from the West Coast, primarily

Los Angeles, into Hawaii using couriers on commercial flights or via package delivery services. According to 2000 Operation Jetway statistics, there were eight heroin seizures in Hawaii yielding a total of over 3 kilograms.

### **Coast-to-Coast Mexican Heroin Trafficking Ring Members Arrested**

Federal agents made dozens of arrests across the country in June 2000 as they dismantled a multi-million-dollar Mexican criminal group based in Nayarit, Mexico. The group smuggled unusually pure and inexpensive Mexican black tar heroin to locations throughout the United States, including Hawaii. The group used juvenile girls and men in their sixties traveling alone to transport heroin and other drugs from Los Angeles to distribution cells in Hawaii as well as other areas. Each courier transported 1 or 2 pounds of heroin concealed in a waistband or inside a boom box radio. The group also distributed heroin at the retail level in Honolulu.

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Source: Organized Crime Drug Enforcement Task Force.

### **Investigators Dismantle Mexican Drug Ring**

In December 2001 a joint federal, state, and county investigation dismantled a major Mexican black tar heroin distribution ring on Oahu and the island of Hawaii. The distribution network smuggled shipments of up to 3 kilograms of heroin at a time, according to the U.S. Attorney. The heroin was produced in Mexico and smuggled into the United States at Tijuana, then transported—strapped to the bodies of couriers—on commercial airline flights to Hawaii. The 13-month investigation, dubbed Operation Island Pipeline, resulted in the indictment of 20 people, including 6 Mexican nationals, on heroin trafficking and money laundering charges. Most were arrested in raids conducted in Hawaii, while authorities in Mexico arrested several others.

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Source: HIDTA Task Force.

## Distribution

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Mexican criminal groups are the primary wholesale distributors of heroin, and street gangs are the primary retail distributors of the drug in Hawaii. According to the NDIC National Drug Threat Survey 2001, Mexican criminal groups dominate the wholesale distribution of Mexican black tar heroin in Hawaii. These criminal groups distribute the drug to street gangs, the primary retail distributors of heroin. Pacific Islander and other local independent dealers also distribute some heroin at the retail level. Heroin, packaged in balloons or papers containing one-eighth to one-quarter gram, typically is sold from private

residences and bars. Retail heroin distribution commonly occurs within tightly knit communities.

### Two Killed Over Heroin Distribution

A Mexican criminal group that transported Mexican black tar heroin from Los Angeles to Hawaii was responsible for the murder of two individuals in a dispute over control of heroin distribution territory on Oahu. Both victims were shot in the head.

Source: Organized Crime Drug Enforcement Task Force.

## Cocaine

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The abuse of cocaine, particularly crack, is decreasing but remains a threat to the state. Pacific Islander independent dealers and Mexican criminal groups in Hawaii transport most of the cocaine into the state from the West Coast, typically using couriers on commercial flights or via package delivery services. These

same independent dealers and criminal groups dominate the wholesale distribution of powdered cocaine in Hawaii. Pacific Islander independent dealers and Samoan and Tongan street gangs are the primary retail distributors of powdered cocaine and crack cocaine.

## Abuse

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Abuse of powdered and crack cocaine in Hawaii is decreasing. In 2000 cocaine ranked third—behind methamphetamine and marijuana—in the number of admissions for drug abuse in Hawaii. According to TEDS data, admissions to publicly funded treatment facilities for cocaine abuse in Hawaii increased from 513 admissions in 1994 to 692 in 1996, then decreased to 476 admissions in 1998, and 364 in 2000. According to a Center for Substance Abuse Treatment survey in 1995 and 1998, cocaine was the only drug for which there was a substantial decline in both abuse and treatment admissions for all age groups, both genders, and all ethnicities.

Fewer adult male arrestees in Honolulu tested positive for cocaine than for methamphetamine. In 2000 ADAM data indicate that nearly 16 percent of adult male arrestees tested positive for cocaine abuse. By comparison, nearly 36 percent of adult male arrestees tested positive for methamphetamine abuse.

Cocaine abuse among young people is limited and appears to be decreasing. Hawaii school age youths abuse cocaine less frequently than their peers nationwide. According to the 1999 YRBS, 7.8 percent of Hawaiian high school students reported lifetime cocaine abuse compared with 9.5 percent of high school students nationwide. The 2000 Hawaii Student Alcohol, Tobacco, and



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Other Drug Use Study indicates that lifetime cocaine abuse among tenth grade student respondents decreased from 7.2 percent in 1993 to 3.5

percent in 2000; lifetime cocaine abuse among twelfth grade student respondents decreased from 8.2 percent in 1993 to 5.8 percent in 2000.

Availability

Sufficient quantities of powdered cocaine and crack cocaine are available to meet user demand in Hawaii. Despite law enforcement reports indicating that cocaine availability has decreased significantly on Oahu and, to a lesser extent, on the other islands, cocaine prices have declined only slightly.

Ounce and gram prices for powdered cocaine decreased slightly from 1992 to 2000. Powdered cocaine in Hawaii sold for \$1,200 to \$1,800 per ounce in 1992 compared with \$900 to \$1,700 per ounce in 2000. Powdered cocaine sold for \$150 per gram in 1992 compared with \$100 to \$120 per gram in 2000. The price of crack cocaine in 2000 ranged from \$1,400 to \$1,600 per ounce and \$10 to \$100 per rock. In 2000 powdered cocaine sold for \$17,000 to \$30,000 per kilogram. Prices for cocaine in Hawaii are generally higher than on the mainland. Purity levels for cocaine ranged from 60 to 85 percent in Hawaii, according to the DEA Los Angeles Division.

The number of cocaine-related federal drug sentences in Hawaii fluctuated between FY1996 and FY2000. According to U.S. Sentencing Commission data, Hawaii had 27 cocaine-related federal sentences in FY1996, 25 in FY1997, 16 in FY1998, 73 in FY1999, and 52 in FY2000. Furthermore, 35.1 percent of all federal drug-related sentences in Hawaii were cocaine-related in FY2000 compared with 44.2 percent nationwide.

Twelve Arrested in Raid on Suspected Drug House

Officers in Hawaii County arrested 12 individuals following a raid on a private residence on the island of Hawaii. Officers seized 7 grams of powdered cocaine and nearly 5 grams of crack cocaine as well as other drugs, drug paraphernalia, and cash. Police said those arrested were converting powdered cocaine into crack at the time of the raid.

Source: Hawaii County Police Department.

Violence

The distribution and abuse of powdered and crack cocaine are associated with criminal activity in Hawaii, including homicide, assault, and child abuse and neglect. Violent criminal activity

frequently is associated with the retail distribution of cocaine. Street gangs that distribute crack cocaine commonly engage in violence when defending their territory from rival distributors.

Production

Coca is not cultivated nor is cocaine produced in Hawaii. Pacific Islander independent dealers and street gangs often convert powdered cocaine into crack locally to avoid the more severe federal

penalties for transporting crack cocaine into the state. They use private homes or stash houses to convert powdered cocaine to crack.

## Transportation

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Pacific Islander independent dealers and Mexican criminal groups are the primary transporters of cocaine into the state. According to Honolulu Police Department authorities, Pacific Islander independent dealers with ties to California, particularly Los Angeles and San Francisco, dominate the transportation of cocaine from California into Hawaii.

Most powdered cocaine is transported into Hawaii by couriers on commercial flights or via package delivery services. Couriers on commercial flights typically transport the drug into Hawaii in their baggage. Los Angeles is the major transshipment point for cocaine transported into Hawaii via commercial flights. According to 2000 Operation Jetway statistics, there were six cocaine seizures in Hawaii totaling almost 20 kilograms; four of those seizures originated in California.

### **Man Accused of Smuggling 12 Pounds of Cocaine**

In April 2000 law enforcement officers arrested a California man en route to Maui after his plane landed at Honolulu International Airport. The man had 12 pounds of powdered cocaine concealed in two gift-wrapped boxes packed in his luggage.

Source: Hawaii HIDTA Airport Task Force.

### **Cocaine Seized From Two Females**

In December 1999 Maui Operation Jetway Task Force officers seized 500 grams of cocaine from two females traveling from Los Angeles to Maui. One suspect hid the cocaine in a plastic bag in her bra, and the other suspect hid the cocaine in the hollowed-out soles of her sneakers.

Source: EPIC.

### **Task Force Officers Seize Cocaine**

In June 1998 Honolulu Operation Jetway Task Force officers seized approximately 5 kilograms of cocaine from a male resident of Los Angeles traveling from that city to Honolulu. The suspect assisted task force officers in a controlled delivery that resulted in five additional arrests.

Source: EPIC.

## Distribution

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Pacific Islander independent dealers and Mexican criminal groups with ties to California and Mexico primarily distribute cocaine at the wholesale level throughout the islands. Pacific Islander independent dealers and Samoan and Tongan street gangs distribute cocaine at the retail level. Samoan street gangs with ties to gangs in Los Angeles and San Francisco convert

and distribute crack cocaine in Hawaii. According to the NDIC National Drug Threat Survey 2001, retail distribution of crack cocaine occurs primarily at open-air drug markets near congested low-income housing areas and in nightclubs. In suburban areas distribution occurs almost exclusively in private residences.



## Other Dangerous Drugs

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The other dangerous drugs (ODDs) category includes club drugs and diverted pharmaceuticals. Currently, the threat posed by club drugs such as MDMA, GHB, and LSD is limited. However, MDMA abuse is increasing in Hawaii. Club drugs are used primarily by teens and young adults at all-night dance parties called raves. The abuse of diverted pharmaceuticals such as Oxy-Contin is increasing in Hawaii. There is no evidence to suggest that ODDs contribute to

violence in the state and, with the exception of a few isolated incidents, ODDs are not produced in Hawaii. Couriers carrying false-bottom luggage and traveling on commercial flights typically transport ODDs. Package delivery services also are used to transport ODDs. Caucasian criminal groups and local independent dealers are the primary wholesale and retail distributors of ODDs in Hawaii.

## MDMA

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MDMA, also called ecstasy, Adam, XTC, E, and X, is a synthetic psychoactive drug with amphetamine-like and hallucinogenic properties. MDMA was patented in Germany in 1914 and was sometimes given to psychiatric patients to assist in psychotherapy. This practice was never approved by the American Psychological Association or the Food and Drug Administration. It is sometimes called the hug drug because users say it makes them feel good. However, use of the

drug may cause psychological difficulties similar to those associated with methamphetamine and cocaine abuse including confusion, depression, sleep problems, anxiety, and paranoia. MDMA is taken orally in tablet or capsule form. The user begins to feel the effects within 1 hour of ingestion. Effects may last up to 6 hours, depending on dosage, purity, and the environment in which it is taken. Some abusers take multiple doses, consuming as many as 10 tablets in a single night.

### Raves

Throughout the 1990s high energy all-night dances known as raves, which feature hard-pounding techno-music and flashing laser lights, increased in popularity among teens and young adults. Raves occur in most metropolitan areas of the country. They can be either permanent dance clubs or temporary “weekend event” sites. Temporary sites may be set up at various locations including abandoned warehouses, open fields, empty buildings, and civic centers. Raves are often promoted through flyers and advertisements distributed at clubs, record shops, clothing stores, on college campuses, and over the Internet.

Raves have become key locations for club drug distribution. MDMA is one of the most popular club drugs. Rave club owners and managers often sell items that are associated with MDMA abuse such as bottled water, pacifiers, menthol nasal inhalers, and glow sticks. “Ravers” drink water to offset dehydration and use pacifiers to prevent the grinding of teeth—two side effects of MDMA abuse. Menthol nasal inhalers and glow sticks are used to enhance the effects of MDMA because MDMA heightens sensory and light perception.

The physical and psychological effects of MDMA abuse vary widely. MDMA is a mood- and mind-altering drug affecting brain serotonin levels. Common psychological effects are feelings of emotional closeness coupled with the breakdown of personal communication barriers, a sense of peace with oneself and the world, an enhanced sense of pleasure, greater self-confidence, and an increased sense of energy. MDMA abuse increases blood pressure and heart rate and can result in heart failure or heat stroke. Physical exertion can cause body temperature to increase to as high as 109 degrees. Physical effects include muscle tension, involuntary teeth clenching, nausea, blurred vision, rapid eye movement, faintness, chills or sweating, extreme relaxation, and tremors.

About 80 percent of the MDMA consumed worldwide is produced in laboratories in the Netherlands and Belgium. MDMA distributed in Hawaii is transported primarily from these source areas. Law enforcement and U.S. military officials in Honolulu report an increase in the abuse of ODDs in Hawaii, particularly MDMA. In 2002 the drug typically sells for \$15 to \$20 per tablet in Honolulu. MDMA is distributed primarily by Caucasian criminal groups and local independent dealers.

## GHB

GHB, also known as liquid ecstasy, scoop, grievous bodily harm, and Georgia home boy, is abused for its euphoric, sedative, and anabolic effects; however, its abuse can induce coma and cause insomnia, anxiety, tremors, and sweating. GHB combined with methamphetamine increases the risk of seizures. Overdoses can occur quickly; some of the effects include drowsiness, nausea, vomiting, loss of consciousness, impaired breathing, and death. GHB is eliminated from the body quickly and may be difficult to detect in emergency rooms and other treatment

### Air Force Administrators Weekend Drug Tests

In January 2001 U.S. Air Force officials announced that they were conducting random weekend drug testing at their installations in Hawaii because of the increasing abuse of club drugs, including MDMA.

Source: *Associated Press*, 26 January 2001.

### U.S. Marine Dies From Overdose

In August 2001 a U.S. Marine died from an overdose of drugs, including MDMA and LSD, after attending a rave party in Hawaii.

Source: Naval Criminal Investigative Service.

MDMA abuse is increasing among Hawaii high school students. According to the 2000 Hawaii Student Alcohol, Tobacco, and Other Drug Use Study, 4.1 percent of Hawaii tenth grade students reported lifetime MDMA abuse in 1998 compared with 5.3 percent of tenth grade students in 2000. In 1998, 5.3 percent of Hawaii twelfth grade students reported lifetime MDMA abuse compared with 8.4 percent in 2000.

facilities. The drug increasingly is implicated in poisonings, overdoses, sexual assaults, and fatalities. GHB can be produced from easily obtainable ingredients, one of which is GBL (gamma-butyrolactone), a solvent commonly sold as a paint stripper.

GBL is a List I chemical used in the production of GHB and, when taken orally, is metabolized into GHB in the body. GBL is sold commonly as a powder or liquid at some gyms, fitness centers, and health food stores.

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In Hawaii the threat posed by GHB or GBL is limited. GHB and GBL are distributed in fitness clubs in Hawaii because it is touted as a muscle-building supplement. In 1999 state authorities seized three GHB laboratories—two on Maui and one on Oahu. Caucasian criminal groups and local independent dealers are the primary distributors of GHB.

**Agents Seize Date-Rape Drug**

In July 1998 law enforcement officers arrested and charged a resident of Honolulu with producing and distributing GHB. They estimated the street value of the GHB to be \$37,000.

Source: State of Hawaii, Department of Public Safety, Narcotics Enforcement Division.

**LSD**

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In Hawaii the threat posed by LSD is limited. LSD, also known as acid, boomers, and yellow sunshines, is a hallucinogen that induces abnormalities in sensory perception. The effects of LSD are unpredictable and depend on the dosage, the environment in which it is used, and the user’s personality, mood, and expectations. Abusers may feel the effects within 30 to 90 minutes. Physical effects include dilated pupils, higher body temperature, increased heart rate and blood pressure, sweating, loss of appetite, sleeplessness, dry mouth, and tremors. LSD abusers have reported experiencing numbness, weakness, trem-

bling, and nausea. Flashbacks are a long-term disorder associated with LSD abuse. LSD typically is taken orally and is sold in tablet, capsule, and liquid forms and on pieces of paper that have absorbed the drug. Historically, LSD has been produced in northern California.

LSD is available in Hawaii for \$4 to \$6 per dosage unit or hit and \$225 to \$275 per page, a 100-dosage-unit sheet. LSD is distributed primarily by Caucasian criminal groups and local independent dealers.

**Diverted Pharmaceuticals**

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Diverted pharmaceuticals are a growing concern in Hawaii. According to DEA, some of the most abused pharmaceutical drugs in Hawaii are hydrocodone products such as Lortab and Lorcet (both combinations of hydrocodone bitartrate and acetaminophen) and diazepam (a sedative hypnotic). These drugs are illegally sold for \$3 to \$7 per tablet. OxyContin, the brand name for controlled-release oxycodone, is becoming more popular. There have been 2 OxyContin-related deaths on Oahu as of March 2002 compared with 19 in 2001, 6 in 2000, and 3 each in 1999 and 1998. According to the Honolulu chief medical

examiner, abusers of OxyContin typically are Caucasian males in their forties and fifties. Another pharmaceutical, Dilaudid (a synthetic narcotic), sells for \$40 to \$80 per tablet. Pharmaceuticals most commonly are diverted through prescription forgery or theft or by doctor shopping, which involves obtaining prescriptions from multiple sources. Caucasian criminal groups and local independent dealers are the primary distributors of diverted pharmaceuticals in Hawaii.

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## Outlook

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Crystal methamphetamine abuse will continue to represent the most significant drug threat to Hawaii. Methamphetamine will remain the predominant drug problem in the state and will represent a greater threat than any other illegal drug. Methamphetamine production and conversion of powdered methamphetamine to crystal methamphetamine will continue to increase in Hawaii because of growing demand. Violent crime associated with methamphetamine production, distribution, and abuse will increase. Mexican criminal groups will continue to dominate the transportation and distribution of crystal and powdered methamphetamine in Hawaii.

Marijuana will continue to be widely available and frequently abused in Hawaii. Availability could increase due to more in-state cultivation. Despite an effective eradication program, the amount of marijuana produced in Hawaii will continue to meet the demands of drug abusers in the state. Cannabis growers will continue to exploit remote areas of the state for outdoor cultivation. However, growers may cultivate cannabis indoors in an effort to evade law enforcement detection. Pacific Islander and other local independent dealers will continue to be the primary wholesale and retail distributors of marijuana throughout the state.

Heroin will likely become an increasing threat to Hawaii. Mexican black tar heroin will become more widely available. Mexican criminal groups will continue to transport heroin along with other drugs directly from the mainland and distribute them at the wholesale level.

The distribution and abuse of primarily crack cocaine will remain a problem in Hawaii. Cocaine abuse will likely stabilize at low levels, and demand for cocaine may decline. Pacific Islander independent dealers and Mexican criminal groups will continue to transport cocaine into Hawaii, primarily from the West Coast, and distribute the drug at the wholesale level. Pacific Islander independent dealers and Samoan and Tongan street gangs will continue to distribute cocaine at the retail level.

Other dangerous drugs, particularly MDMA, will gain in popularity in Hawaii. The threat posed by club drugs, primarily MDMA, GHB, and LSD, is of increasing concern to law enforcement authorities. In addition, law enforcement authorities throughout the state identify the abuse of diverted pharmaceuticals, especially OxyContin, as a growing threat, and diversion of it and other pharmaceuticals will in all likelihood increase. Caucasian criminal groups and local independent dealers will remain the primary wholesale distributors of ODDs.

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## *Sources*

### **State and Regional**

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Hawaii County Police Department

Hawaii High Intensity Drug Trafficking Area  
Task Force

Honolulu Police Department

*Honolulu Star-Bulletin*

Kauai Police Department

Maui Police Department

State of Hawaii, [www.hawaii.gov](http://www.hawaii.gov)

Attorney General's Office

Center for Substance Abuse Treatment

Department of Land and Natural Resources

Department of Public Safety

Narcotics Enforcement Division

National Guard

### **National**

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Columbia University

National Center on Addiction and Substance Abuse

Organized Crime Drug Enforcement Task Force

Office of National Drug Control Policy

U.S. Department of Defense

Department of the Navy

Naval Criminal Investigative Service

U.S. Department of Health and Human Services

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

National Institutes of Health

National Institute on Drug Abuse

Community Epidemiology Work Group

Marijuana Potency Monitoring Program

Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration

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U.S. Department of Justice

Drug Enforcement Administration

El Paso Intelligence Center

Honolulu District Office

Los Angeles Division

San Francisco Division

National Institute of Justice

Office of Justice Programs

Sentencing Commission

U.S. Department of State

U.S. Department of Treasury

Customs Service

**Other**

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*Associated Press*

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