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Arizona

Drug Threat Assessment



National Drug Intelligence Center
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Arizona Drug Threat Assessment

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Preface

This report is a strategic assessment that addresses the status and outlook of the drug threat to Arizona. 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 Arizona.

Arizona Drug Threat Assessment

Executive Summary

Arizona is a gateway to the United States for a large percentage of the illicit drugs available in drug markets throughout the country. Large quantities of methamphetamine, cocaine, heroin, and marijuana are smuggled into the state from Mexico for distribution within Arizona or for eventual transport to drug markets throughout the nation. Other dangerous drugs are smuggled into Arizona from Mexico as well, primarily for abuse within the state.

Methamphetamine is a primary drug threat to Arizona. High purity, low cost methamphetamine is readily available, and the drug is abused throughout the state. Crystal methamphetamine is becoming increasingly available throughout Arizona; some areas report higher levels of abuse of crystal methamphetamine than powdered methamphetamine. Methamphetamine produced in Mexico is the predominant type available in the state. Methamphetamine produced in Arizona and other states, particularly California and Nevada, is available, but to a lesser extent. Methamphetamine is produced in the state by Caucasian criminal groups and independent producers. They typically produce the drug in ounce quantities using the iodine/red phosphorus method. Mexican drug trafficking organizations, Mexican criminal groups, outlaw motorcycle gangs, and Mexican independent laboratory operators also produce methamphetamine in Arizona, but to a lesser extent. Mexican drug trafficking organizations and criminal groups control the transportation and wholesale distribution of most methamphetamine. Caucasian criminal groups, Caucasian and Mexican local independent dealers, outlaw motorcycle gangs, and Hispanic gangs also distribute the drug at the wholesale level. Caucasian and Mexican criminal groups, Caucasian and Mexican local independent dealers, outlaw motorcycle gangs, Hispanic street gangs, and prison gangs dominate retail-level methamphetamine distribution in the state.

Cocaine is a significant drug threat to Arizona. Powdered cocaine and crack cocaine are widely available and frequently abused throughout the state; however, crack cocaine is more readily available in larger metropolitan areas such as Phoenix and Tucson. Mexican drug trafficking organizations and criminal groups dominate the transportation of cocaine into Arizona. They generally smuggle cocaine from Mexico to Arizona through and between ports of entry along the U.S.–Mexico border. Mexican drug trafficking

organizations and criminal groups control wholesale powdered cocaine distribution. Hispanic street gangs and African American, Hispanic, and Caucasian independent dealers dominate retail powdered cocaine distribution in Arizona. African American and Hispanic street gangs and independent dealers control the retail distribution of crack cocaine.

Heroin poses a considerable threat to Arizona. Mexican black tar heroin is the predominant type available in the state; Mexican brown powdered heroin is becoming increasingly available. Mexican drug trafficking organizations and criminal groups control the transportation and wholesale distribution of Mexican black tar and brown powdered heroin. Mexican criminal groups, Hispanic street gangs, prison gangs, and local independent dealers dominate retail heroin distribution in Arizona. African American street gangs and outlaw motorcycle gangs also distribute heroin at the retail level, albeit to a lesser extent.

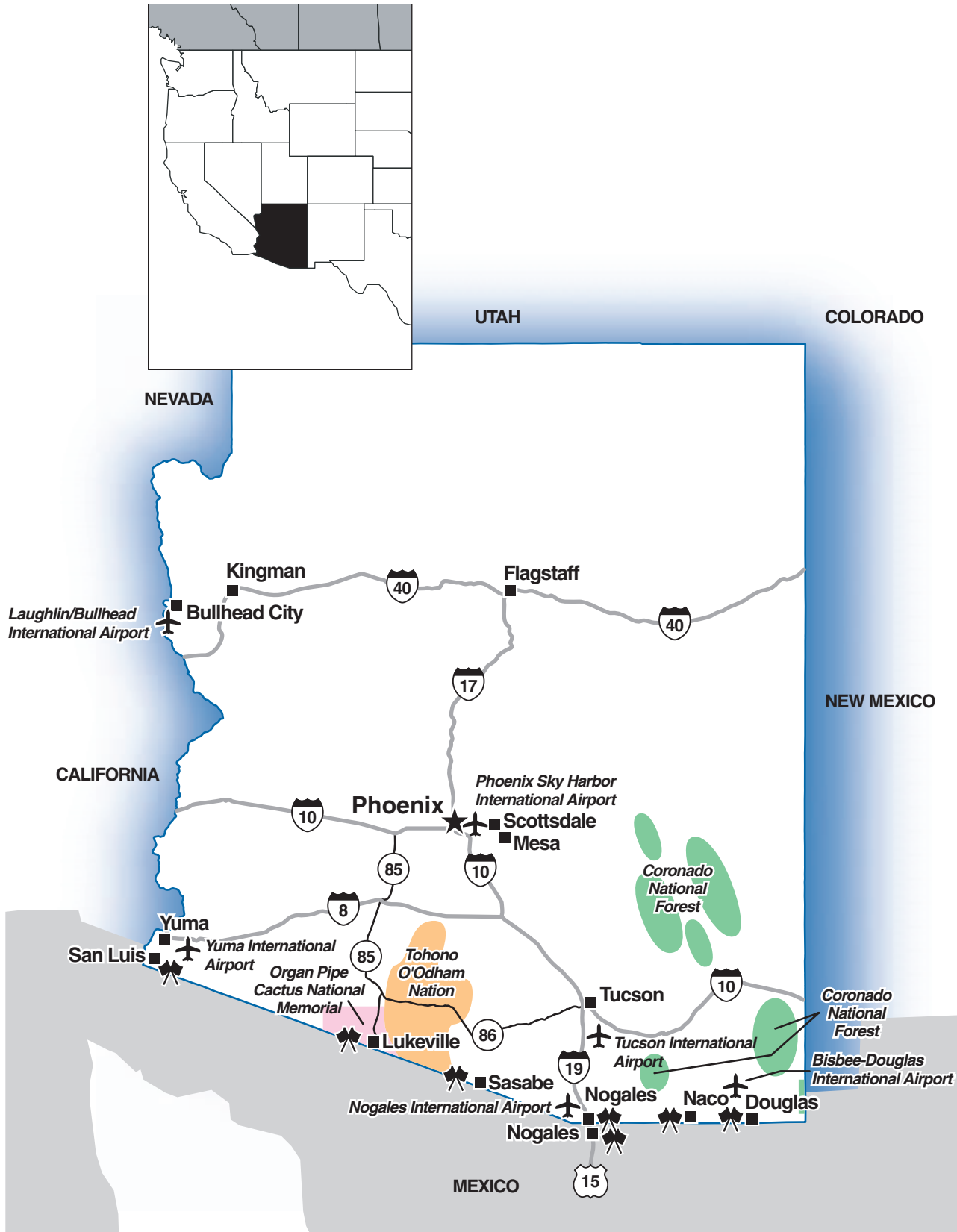
Marijuana is a significant drug threat to Arizona. Marijuana produced in Mexico is the predominant type available throughout Arizona. Locally produced marijuana and Canada-produced marijuana, commonly called BC Bud, are also available, but to a lesser extent. Cannabis cultivation occurs within the state and generally is controlled by Caucasian and Hispanic criminal groups and independent producers. Mexican drug trafficking organizations and criminal groups dominate the smuggling of marijuana from Mexico into Arizona. Mexican drug trafficking organizations and criminal groups control wholesale distribution of marijuana produced in Mexico; Hispanic street gangs and Caucasian, African American, and Hispanic local independent dealers control retail distribution of the drug. Caucasian and Hispanic criminal groups and independent dealers are the primary wholesale and retail distributors of locally produced marijuana in Arizona. Caucasian independent dealers are the primary retail distributors of the limited quantities of BC Bud available in the state.

Other dangerous drugs (ODDs) include club drugs such as MDMA, GHB and its analogs, ketamine, the hallucinogens LSD and PCP, and Rohypnol. ODDs also include inhalants and diverted pharmaceuticals. MDMA is readily available and abused in Arizona and poses a considerable drug threat to the state. Other ODDs present varying threats to Arizona. Various criminal groups and independent dealers transport ODDs to Arizona via private vehicles, couriers on commercial and private aircraft, couriers traveling by foot entering the United States from Mexico, and package delivery services. Club drugs primarily are sold and abused by middle-class, suburban, young adults at raves and nightclubs and on college campuses. Hallucinogens are also distributed by local independent dealers throughout the state. Pharmaceuticals such as hydrocodone (Vicodin), benzodiazepine (Valium, Xanax), oxycodone (OxyContin, Percocet, Percodan), steroids, and codeine typically are diverted through a variety of techniques including “doctor shopping,” pharmacy diversion, prescription forgery, smuggling from Mexico, and purchasing over the Internet, particularly from foreign sources such as Mexico.

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Arizona.

Note: This map displays features mentioned in the report.



Arizona

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Overview

Arizona ranks twentieth in the country in population with more than 5.1 million residents, of which 75 percent are Caucasian, 5 percent Native American, 3 percent African American, nearly 2 percent Asian, 11.6 percent some other race, and 2.9 percent two or more races. One-quarter of the state's population is of Hispanic or Latino descent. The state is sixth largest in the nation, encompassing a land area of 113,642 square miles. It is composed of forests, deserts, mountain ranges, and dry plains.

Arizona shares a 370-mile border with Mexico. This border area, a large portion of which is open and sparsely populated, cannot be continuously monitored by border enforcement agencies and is used extensively by drug trafficking organizations (DTOs) to smuggle illicit drugs into the United States. Significant quantities of methamphetamine, cocaine, heroin, and marijuana are smuggled from Mexico into Arizona. Federal-wide Drug Seizure System (FDSS) data indicate that Arizona ranked second in the country behind Texas in the total quantity of illicit drugs seized in 2002. Arizona ranked second in the amount of marijuana seized, third in the amount of methamphetamine, sixth in the amount of cocaine, and fifteenth in the amount of heroin seized.

There are six land ports of entry (POEs) along the Arizona portion of the U.S.–Mexico border,

Fast Facts	
Arizona	
Population (2000)	5,130,632
U.S. population ranking	20th
Median household income (2001)	\$42,704
Unemployment rate (October 2001)	5.2%
Land area	113,642 square miles
International border	370 miles
Capital	Phoenix
Other principal cities	Flagstaff, Mesa, Tucson, Yuma
Number of counties	15
Principal industries	Commercial and industrial construction, high technology, retail trade, services, and tourism

including (from west to east) San Luis, Lukeville, Sasabe, Nogales, Naco, and Douglas. Nogales and Douglas operate 24 hours a day and are the busiest POEs in the state. There are numerous unofficial entry points (gates) located in remote

areas along the border between Arizona and Mexico. In 2002 more than 10 million private vehicles, more than 9 million pedestrians, and 312,000 commercial trucks entered Arizona from Mexico. This volume of cross-border traffic facilitates illicit drug transportation and distribution into and throughout the state.

Arizona is a national-level distribution center for illicit drugs, largely due to its multifaceted transportation infrastructure. Drug traffickers commonly use private vehicles and commercial trucks to smuggle illicit drugs into and through the state. Couriers traveling aboard commercial aircraft, commercial buses, and passenger railcars and package delivery services also are used by traffickers, but to a lesser extent. DTOs and criminal groups generally use Interstates 8, 10, 17, 19, and 40 as well as U.S. Highways 85 and 86 as primary routes for transporting drugs throughout Arizona and from Arizona to other regions of the country. Interstate 8 extends from San Diego through Yuma and terminates at I-10, approximately midway between Phoenix and Tucson. Interstate 10 spans the entire country, connecting Arizona, particularly Phoenix and Tucson, with the West Coast at Los Angeles and the East Coast at Jacksonville, Florida. Interstate 17 connects Phoenix to Flagstaff and provides access to eastern and western states via I-40. Interstate 19 connects Nogales on the U.S.–Mexico border with I-10 at Tucson. Interstate 40 originates at I-15 in Barstow, California, passes through Arizona, and terminates at Wilmington, North Carolina. US 85 begins at the U.S.–Mexico border and ends in the Phoenix metropolitan area. US 86 splits from US 85 and extends eastward to Tucson.

Operation Pipeline

Operation Pipeline is a national highway interdiction program supported by the El Paso Intelligence Center (EPIC). Drug seizures are reported to Operation Pipeline by federal, state, and local law enforcement agencies nationwide operating along highways and interstates most frequently used to transport illegal drugs and drug proceeds.

Arizona has six international airports, which include Bisbee-Douglas International Airport, Laughlin/Bullhead International Airport, Nogales International Airport, Phoenix Sky Harbor International Airport, Tucson International Airport, and Yuma International Airport. The state also has over 75 smaller public airports, more than 200 private airports, and an estimated 600 abandoned airstrips. Drug traffickers often use these airports and airstrips to smuggle illicit drugs into the United States. Moreover, traffickers reportedly establish clandestine airstrips near the U.S.–Mexico border to further facilitate their drug smuggling efforts. Occasionally, pilots evade radar and land at remote locations in Arizona including abandoned airstrips or long stretches of highway. The Air and Marine Interdiction Coordination Center (AMICC), which uses radar to track aircraft approaching the U.S.–Mexico border, reports that aircraft often “fade” from radar near the border and appear to land at Mexican airports, airfields, and remote locations. Many fades are indicative of traffickers moving drugs to the border and offloading the shipments for smuggling overland into Arizona. Fade activity is greater in Sonora, the Mexican state bordering Arizona, than in any other bordering Mexican state. In 2002 nearly 54 percent of fades (534 of 990) along the U.S.–Mexico border occurred in the state of Sonora, Mexico.

Operation Jetway

Operation Jetway is an EPIC-supported domestic interdiction program. Drug seizures are reported to Operation Jetway by federal, state, and local law enforcement agencies across the nation at airports, train stations, bus stations, package shipment facilities, U.S. Post Offices, and airport hotels and motels.

Traffickers smuggle illicit drugs by rail across the Arizona portion of the U.S.–Mexico border; however, according to EPIC, the extent to which DTOs and criminal groups use freight railcars for smuggling drugs is a significant intelligence gap. According to the Arizona High Intensity Drug Trafficking Area (HIDTA), sophisticated hidden compartments reportedly

have been installed in freight railcars at railroad repair facilities in Mexico, complicating the detection of illicit drugs at the two rail interchanges located in the state at the Douglas and Nogales POEs. In 2002 a railroad car x-ray machine became operational at the Nogales POE to facilitate freight railcar drug seizures. The U.S. Customs Service (USCS), now the Bureau of Customs and Border Protection (CBP) and the Bureau of Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE), reports that the amount of marijuana seized from freight railcars in Arizona is nominal but increasing. USCS inspectors seized 11 kilograms of marijuana from freight railcars in fiscal year (FY) 1998, 150 kilograms in FY1999, 231 kilograms in FY2000, and 364 kilograms in FY2001.

Traffickers often smuggle illicit drugs across the Arizona portion of the U.S.–Mexico border using couriers on horseback or backpackers who travel through remote areas between the POEs. Drug traffickers extensively use border areas such as the Tohono O’Odham Nation, Coronado National Forest, and Organ Pipe Cactus National Monument because the rugged terrain camouflages smuggling activity. According to EPIC, 50 percent of all illicit drugs seized within 150 miles of the Arizona portion of the U.S.–Mexico border in FY2002 were seized between the POEs.

Traffickers also smuggle illicit drugs into the state through tunnels that extend from Mexico into Arizona. Law enforcement officials discovered tunnels that originated in Mexico and terminated in houses or businesses in Douglas, Naco, and Nogales. From September 1995 through January 2003, 12 tunnels connecting Nogales, Arizona, with Nogales, Sonora, Mexico were discovered.

Methamphetamine

Methamphetamine is a primary drug threat to Arizona. High purity, low cost methamphetamine is readily available, and the drug is abused throughout the state. Crystal methamphetamine is becoming increasingly available throughout Arizona; some areas report higher levels of abuse

Mexican DTOs and criminal groups are the dominant transporters of illicit drugs into Arizona. They also control the wholesale, midlevel, and retail distribution of drugs in the state. These DTOs and criminal groups use familial ties and extensive connections between groups to transport and distribute significant quantities of methamphetamine, cocaine, heroin, and marijuana throughout Arizona.

According to the Treatment Episode Data Set (TEDS), substance abuse treatment admissions to publicly funded facilities in Arizona increased from 13,949 in 1998 to 14,127 in 2001, then decreased to 11,239 in 2002.

The number of drug-induced deaths in Arizona has increased. According to the Arizona Department of Health Services, the number of drug-induced deaths increased 73 percent from 334 in 2000 to 577 in 2001. The rate of drug-induced deaths per 100,000 population in Arizona increased from 6.5 in 2000 to 11.2 in 2001.

Survey data indicate that the rate of illicit drug use in Arizona is comparable to the rate nationwide. According to combined data from the 1999 and the 2000 National Household Survey on Drug Abuse (NHSDA), 6.1 percent of Arizona residents surveyed reported having abused an illicit drug in the month prior to the survey, compared to 6.3 percent nationwide.

According to data from the U.S. Sentencing Commission (USSC), the percentage of federal sentences in Arizona that were drug-related decreased from 36.2 in FY1997 to 28.3 in FY2001. Drug trafficking accounted for approximately 95 percent and drug possession for nearly 5 percent of drug-related sentences from FY1999 through FY2001, on average.

of crystal methamphetamine than powdered methamphetamine. Methamphetamine produced in Mexico is the predominant type available in the state. Methamphetamine produced in Arizona and other states, particularly California and Nevada, also is available, but to a lesser extent.

Methamphetamine is produced in the state by Caucasian criminal groups and independent producers. They typically produce the drug in ounce quantities using the iodine/red phosphorus method. Mexican DTOs, Mexican criminal groups, outlaw motorcycle gangs (OMGs), and Mexican independent laboratory operators also produce methamphetamine in Arizona, but to a lesser extent. Mexican DTOs and criminal groups control the transportation and wholesale

distribution of most methamphetamine. Caucasian criminal groups, Caucasian and Mexican local independent dealers, OMGs, and Hispanic gangs also distribute the drug at the wholesale level. Caucasian and Mexican criminal groups, Caucasian and Mexican local independent dealers, OMGs, Hispanic street gangs, and prison gangs dominate retail-level methamphetamine distribution in the state.

Abuse

Methamphetamine abuse is increasing in Arizona. Law enforcement agencies throughout the state report that the level of methamphetamine abuse is rising in their jurisdictions and that Caucasians appear to be the primary abusers. In response to the National Drug Intelligence Center (NDIC) National Drug Threat Survey (NDTS) 2002, 29 of the 36 law enforcement respondents in Arizona who rated the levels of methamphetamine abuse in their jurisdictions reported high levels of abuse, 6 reported medium abuse levels, and 1 reported a low level of abuse. Twelve respondents did not rate the level of methamphetamine abuse in their jurisdictions. Moreover, law enforcement agencies in several areas reported that the abuse of crystal methamphetamine has become more prevalent in their jurisdictions than the abuse of powdered methamphetamine.

Crystal Methamphetamine

Crystal methamphetamine is a colorless, odorless, smokable form of d-methamphetamine that resembles glass fragments or ice shavings. It is produced through the crystallization of methamphetamine powder. Crystal methamphetamine often is referred to as ice, glass, or shards.

According to TEDS, the number of amphetamine-related treatment admissions to publicly funded treatment facilities in Arizona increased from 812 in 1998 to 1,267 in 2001, then decreased to 765 in 2002. (Nationwide, 95 percent of

NDIC National Drug Threat Survey

The National Drug Threat Survey (NDTS) 2002 was administered by NDIC to a representative sample of state and local law enforcement agencies throughout the United States to assess the availability, abuse, and overall threat posed by all major drugs. NDIC received 2,906 survey responses from law enforcement agencies, an overall response rate of 80 percent. Survey respondents were asked to rank the greatest drug threats to their areas and to indicate the level of availability for each major drug type. They also were asked to provide information on specific groups involved in the transportation and distribution of illicit drugs. Responding agencies also provided narrative assessments of various aspects of the overall drug situation and the threat that specific drugs posed to their areas. Survey responses are used by NDIC to substantiate and augment drug threat information obtained from other federal, state, and local law enforcement agencies.

amphetamine-related treatment admissions reported to TEDS are methamphetamine-related.) The number of amphetamine-related admissions was greater than for any other illicit drug in 2002. Moreover, treatment providers in the state report that stimulant abusers are switching from crack cocaine to crystal methamphetamine because it can be smoked like crack, is readily available, and is less expensive.

The number of amphetamine/methamphetamine-related emergency department (ED) mentions in the Phoenix metropolitan area has increased for the past 5 years. According to the Drug Abuse Warning Network (DAWN), amphetamine/methamphetamine-related ED mentions increased from 808 in 1998 to 860 in 1999, 1,261 in 2000, 1,492 in 2001, and 1,937 in 2002. In 2002 the rate of methamphetamine-related ED mentions per 100,000 population in the Phoenix metropolitan area (17) was dramatically higher than the rate nationwide (7).

Methamphetamine-related deaths in Arizona increased significantly from 1997 through 2001. According to DAWN mortality data, the number of deaths in which methamphetamine was a factor in the Phoenix metropolitan area more than tripled from 34 in 1997 to 122 in 2001. Phoenix ranked first in the number of methamphetamine-related deaths among the 33 metropolitan areas reporting to DAWN in 2001. In addition, methamphetamine and amphetamine were the only illicit drugs for which deaths increased in the Phoenix metropolitan area during 2001.

Mortality Data

DAWN mortality data for the Phoenix metropolitan area were provided by medical examiners in Maricopa County. Maricopa County accounts for 94 percent of the metropolitan area population. Medical examiners in Pinal County, which accounts for the remaining 6 percent of the population, did not participate in DAWN in 2001.

The number of individuals testing positive for methamphetamine in employment-related drug screenings in Arizona also has increased in

recent years. According to the Arizona HIDTA, a private testing laboratory conducted 108,562 screenings in 1999, 155,559 in 2000, and 171,845 in 2001. Methamphetamine was present in 1,017 of the 8,338 positive results in 1999 (12.2%), 1,704 of the 12,258 positive results in 2000 (13.9%), and 1,859 of the 12,208 positive results in 2001 (15.2%).

Methamphetamine abuse is very common among adult male arrestees in Phoenix; methamphetamine abuse also occurs among adult male arrestees in Tucson, but to a lesser extent. According to the Arrestee Drug Abuse Monitoring (ADAM) program, in 2001, 25.3 percent of adult male arrestees who were screened for drug abuse tested positive for methamphetamine use in Phoenix, and 5.4 percent tested positive in Tucson. Phoenix had the fifth highest rate of methamphetamine abuse among the 31 cities reported by ADAM.

Methamphetamine commonly is abused among adolescents in Arizona. The drug is becoming increasingly popular among teenagers, according to the Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA) Phoenix Division. According to the 2002 State of Arizona Youth Survey, which is conducted by the Arizona Criminal Justice Commission (ACJC), 5.9 percent of junior and senior high school students reported that they had used methamphetamine/amphetamines at least once in their lifetime. Moreover, 8.6 percent of twelfth grade students, 6.8 percent of tenth grade students, and 2.9 percent of eighth grade students in Arizona reported using methamphetamine/amphetamines at least once in their lifetime.

Availability

Methamphetamine is widely available throughout Arizona. Of the 37 Arizona law enforcement respondents to the NDTs 2002 who rated the level of methamphetamine availability in their jurisdictions, 34 reported high availability,

2 reported medium availability, and 1 reported low availability. Methamphetamine produced in Mexico is the most dominant type; however, methamphetamine produced in Arizona and California is available at different levels throughout the state.

Powdered methamphetamine is the most prevalent type available; however, crystal methamphetamine

is becoming increasingly available and, in some areas, is the only type available.

Table 1. Methamphetamine Seized Within 150 Miles of the U.S.–Mexico Border, 1999–2002

Kilograms				
	1999	2000	2001	2002
Arizona	60	173	367	312
California	691	659	681	490
New Mexico	40	27	10	34
Texas	263	531	314	386

Source: El Paso Intelligence Center.

Seizure data indicate the ready availability of methamphetamine in Arizona. According to FDSS data, the amount of methamphetamine seized in Arizona increased dramatically from 56 kilograms in 1998 to 293 kilograms in 2002. FDSS data indicate that Arizona ranked third in the nation for methamphetamine seizures in 2002. Further, EPIC reports that the amount of methamphetamine seized in Arizona within 150 miles of the U.S.–Mexico border increased substantially from 60 kilograms in 1999 to 173 kilograms in 2000, to 367 kilograms in 2001, then decreased to 312 kilograms in 2002. (See Table 1.) (Disparities in seizure reporting are likely a result of differences in data collection and reporting methodologies.)

Federal-Wide Drug Seizure System

FDSS data comprise seizures made in the United States by DEA, Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI), CBP, and U.S. Coast Guard (USCG). Only seizures that exceed certain threshold weights are included in these statistics: 250 grams of methamphetamine, 500 grams of cocaine, 100 grams of heroin, and 25 grams of marijuana.

The percentage of federal drug sentences that were methamphetamine-related in Arizona was lower than the national percentage in FY2001. According to USSC data, 7.2 percent of federal drug sentences in Arizona in FY2001 were

methamphetamine-related compared with 14.2 percent nationally. The number of methamphetamine-related federal sentences decreased from 59 in FY1997 to 45 in FY1999, then increased to 63 in FY2001.

In FY2002 methamphetamine prices throughout Arizona varied depending on the area and level of distribution. The DEA Phoenix Division reported that in the fourth quarter of FY2002 wholesale quantities of Mexico-produced methamphetamine sold for \$5,000 to \$6,000 per pound in Phoenix and \$4,000 to \$7,000 per pound in Yuma. (Wholesale prices were unavailable for northern Arizona). Methamphetamine sold for \$425 per ounce in Phoenix, \$300 to \$600 per ounce in Yuma, and \$500 to \$600 per ounce in northern Arizona. Crystal methamphetamine sold for approximately \$9,000 per pound and \$600 per ounce in Phoenix and \$900 per ounce in Yuma. (No other prices for crystal methamphetamine are available.)

Methamphetamine purity levels have increased in recent years. Arizona law enforcement agencies report that the purity level of powdered methamphetamine has increased from 20 to 30 percent in 2000 to 25 to 50 percent in 2002. In addition, the purity level of crystal methamphetamine ranges from 95 to 99 percent.

Violence

Violence often is associated with the production, distribution, and abuse of methamphetamine in Arizona. Methamphetamine-related violence poses a significant threat to the state. According to the Office of the Arizona Attorney General, methamphetamine is the illicit drug most commonly associated with violent crime in Arizona. The Maricopa County Sheriff's Office reports that methamphetamine production and distribution are the greatest contributors to increasing rates of violent crime in its jurisdiction. Moreover, of the 36 Arizona law enforcement respondents to the NDTs 2002 who reported methamphetamine-related violence in their jurisdictions, 24 reported an increase in the threat posed by methamphetamine to the safety and security of citizens.

Methamphetamine is a powerful stimulant that affects the central nervous system and can induce anxiety, insomnia, paranoia, hallucinations, mood swings, delusions, and violent behavior,

particularly during the "tweaking" stage of abuse. Law enforcement officials throughout the state attribute an increase in violent crimes such as homicide, domestic violence, child abuse, robbery, burglary, and assault to rising methamphetamine abuse.

Tweaking

As the euphoric effects of methamphetamine diminish, abusers enter the tweaking stage, in which they are prone to violence, delusions, paranoia, and feelings of emptiness and dysphoria. During the tweaking stage, the user often has not slept in days and consequently is extremely irritable. The "tweaker" also craves more methamphetamine, which results in frustration and contributes to anxiety and restlessness. At this stage methamphetamine users may become violent without provocation. Case histories indicate that tweakers have reacted violently to the mere sight of a police uniform.

Production

Most of the methamphetamine available in Arizona is produced in Mexico by Mexican DTOs and criminal groups. However, methamphetamine production occurs in Arizona, although it has been decreasing throughout the state. According to the EPIC National Clandestine Laboratory Seizure System (NCLSS), methamphetamine laboratory seizures decreased significantly in recent years. Federal, state, and local law enforcement authorities in Arizona seized 375 methamphetamine laboratories in 2000, 287 in 2001, and 211 in 2002. According to HIDTA Methamphetamine Conspiracy Group officials, the decrease in laboratory seizures may be attributed to the tighter border controls implemented in 2001. This action has decreased the amount of pseudoephedrine smuggled into Arizona and resulted in methamphetamine production shifting to Mexico, where pseudoephedrine

and other essential chemicals are more easily attainable. In addition, law enforcement officials in Arizona report that methamphetamine abusers in the state prefer high quality crystal methamphetamine produced in Mexico, rather than locally produced powdered methamphetamine. Many abusers who had produced methamphetamine are now purchasing the drug from these DTOs instead of producing it themselves.

Methamphetamine laboratories in Arizona are generally small and yield ounce quantities of the drug. Most methamphetamine laboratories are operated by Caucasian criminal groups and independent producers. Mexican DTOs and criminal groups, OMGs—primarily Hells Angels—and independent Mexican laboratory operators also produce methamphetamine in the state, but to a lesser extent. These groups use ephedrine/pseudoephedrine reduction methods to

produce the drug. (See text box on page 9.) Most producers of methamphetamine in Arizona use the iodine/red phosphorus method. The Birch reduction method of production also is used, but to a much lesser extent. Further, the DEA Phoenix Division reports that crystal methamphetamine typically is produced by Caucasian independent producers in small-scale laboratories that yield an ounce or less of the drug.

Crystal Methamphetamine Conversion

The conversion of powdered methamphetamine to crystal methamphetamine involves dissolving d-methamphetamine powder in a solvent such as denatured alcohol. Evaporation of the solvent yields crystals that resemble glass shards or ice shavings. This “washing” technique removes impurities, resulting in methamphetamine with longer-lasting physical effects and purity levels above 80 percent.

Hells Angels and Methamphetamine Production

Hells Angels Motorcycle Club members produce methamphetamine in Arizona independently and reportedly in concert with Mexican DTOs. Incarcerated Hells Angels members developed strong criminal ties to Mexican traffickers in prison. These associations facilitated the expansion of their methamphetamine production and distribution networks.

Source: Drug Enforcement Administration.

Methamphetamine producers typically establish operations in remote areas or set up laboratories in locations such as residences, mobile homes, and motel rooms. However, small-scale producers are increasingly using mobile methamphetamine “box labs.” Box labs are small in size and easily dismantled, enabling methamphetamine producers to frequently move operations in attempts to avoid detection.

Precursor and essential chemicals used in methamphetamine production contribute to the threat posed by methamphetamine. Methamphetamine producers obtain ephedrine,

pseudoephedrine, and other essential chemicals from Mexican DTOs, although this appears to be occurring somewhat less frequently than in the past. These DTOs typically smuggle the chemicals through the San Luis and Nogales POEs in commercial and private vehicles. Laboratory operators in Arizona also acquire precursor and essential chemicals from criminal groups and independent dealers operating in California. In addition, ephedrine and pseudoephedrine commonly are extracted from cold pills and other over-the-counter medications by laboratory operators; other essential chemicals such as iodine, lithium, and ether are legally available at commercial businesses.

Pseudoephedrine Trafficking Network Dismantled

In January 2002 law enforcement officials dismantled a pseudoephedrine trafficking network involving more than 100 individuals nationwide, including 2 Phoenix men. The Chicago-based organization smuggled pseudoephedrine from Windsor, Ontario, Canada, through Detroit and on to California. The proceeds from the operation were laundered through two Jordanian brothers’ Chicago car dealerships; some of the money was traced to Jordan and other Middle Eastern countries. As a result of this investigation, law enforcement officials seized more than 21 million pseudoephedrine tablets in California in October and December of 2001.

Source: Drug Enforcement Administration.

Methamphetamine production poses serious safety and environmental concerns to Arizona. The production process creates toxic and hazardous waste that endangers law enforcement personnel, emergency response teams, adults and children who reside in or near the homes of methamphetamine producers, and the environment. Moreover, many precursor chemicals are volatile and can be extremely dangerous if not handled properly; in several incidents law enforcement officials have discovered laboratories because of explosions that resulted from improper chemical handling.

Methamphetamine Production Methods

Ephedrine/Pseudoephedrine Reduction:

- **Hydriodic acid/red phosphorus.** The principal chemicals are ephedrine or pseudoephedrine, hydriodic acid, and red phosphorus. This method can yield multipound quantities of high quality d-methamphetamine and often is associated with Mexican DTOs and criminal groups.
- **Iodine/red phosphorus.** The principal chemicals are ephedrine or pseudoephedrine, iodine, and red phosphorus. The required hydriodic acid in this variation of the hydriodic acid/red phosphorus method is produced by the reaction of iodine in water with red phosphorus. This method yields high quality d-methamphetamine.
- **Iodine/hypophosphorous acid.** The principal chemicals are ephedrine or pseudoephedrine, iodine, and hypophosphorous acid. The required hydriodic acid in this variation of the hydriodic acid/red phosphorus method is produced by the reaction of iodine in water with hypophosphorous acid. Known as the hypo method, this method yields lower quality d-methamphetamine. Hypophosphorous acid is more prone than red phosphorus to cause a fire and can produce deadly phosphine gas.
- **Birch.** The principal chemicals are ephedrine or pseudoephedrine, anhydrous ammonia, and sodium or lithium metal. Also known as the Nazi method, this method typically yields ounce quantities of high quality d-methamphetamine and often is used by independent dealers and producers.

Phenyl-2-propanone:

- **P2P.** The principal chemicals are phenyl-2-propanone, aluminum, methylamine, and mercuric acid. This method yields lower quality dl-methamphetamine and traditionally was associated with OMGs.

Transportation

Mexican DTOs and criminal groups smuggle methamphetamine into Arizona primarily from Mexico. The drug also is transported into the state from California and Nevada, but to a lesser extent. OMGs, Caucasian criminal groups, and Caucasian and Mexican independent dealers also transport methamphetamine throughout the state. The Nogales and San Luis POEs are primary entry points for methamphetamine smuggled into Arizona from Mexico. The percentage of Arizona POE methamphetamine seizures occurring at these two POEs increased from 66 percent in 2000 to 100 percent in 2002.

Methamphetamine typically is smuggled from Mexico into Arizona in private and commercial vehicles. The drug also is smuggled into the state by pedestrians, couriers aboard buses

and aircraft, and package delivery services. Traffickers employ a variety of concealment methods to smuggle methamphetamine into Arizona, particularly when using vehicles. Concealment locations in vehicles include seats, gas tanks, quarter panels, dashboards, air cleaners, and headlights.

Most of the methamphetamine smuggled into Arizona from Mexico is transported through the state to areas throughout the country. Traffickers commonly use state routes and less-traveled roads to transport methamphetamine from the border region to Interstates 10 and 40 in Arizona. Once on I-10 and I-40, traffickers transport methamphetamine to primary market areas throughout the country. Operation Pipeline data for 2001 indicate that Arizona law enforcement officials seized 48 pounds of methamphetamine in 14

highway interdictions; 5 occurred on I-40. The largest seizure occurred west of Flagstaff on I-40, where law enforcement officials seized 20.7

pounds of methamphetamine that had been hidden in the gas tank of a private vehicle.

Distribution

Mexican DTOs and criminal groups dominate wholesale methamphetamine distribution in Arizona. Caucasian criminal groups, Caucasian and Mexican independent dealers, OMGs, and Hispanic street gangs also distribute methamphetamine at the wholesale level throughout the state. Law enforcement officials have identified Phoenix and Tucson as major methamphetamine distribution areas in Arizona.

Caucasian and Mexican criminal groups, Caucasian and Mexican local independent dealers, OMGs, Hispanic street gangs, and prison gangs dominate retail-level methamphetamine distribution in the state. Retail dealers frequently purchase methamphetamine from Mexican DTOs and criminal groups that typically are located in the urban areas of Arizona. Most retail-level methamphetamine distribution occurs through street sales and in private residences. However, OMGs typically distribute methamphetamine through selected retail distributors, members of smaller

associated motorcycle gangs, and female associates who work in OMG-owned businesses such as bars and strip clubs.

Retail methamphetamine distributors vary by location throughout the state. In the Phoenix area, Caucasian and Mexican independent dealers dominate retail methamphetamine distribution. In Maricopa County OMGs such as Hells Angels and Huns and independent dealers distribute methamphetamine at the retail level. The Gilbert Police Department reports that Hells Angels and the Mexican Mafia prison gang distribute methamphetamine at the retail level in its jurisdiction. Law enforcement officials in Flagstaff and Yavapai County report that Hells Angels members are involved in retail methamphetamine distribution in their areas. Tucson Police Department officials report that Caucasian independent dealers and OMGs, including Hells Angels and Devils Diciples, distribute methamphetamine in their city.

Cocaine

Cocaine is a significant drug threat to Arizona. Powdered cocaine and crack cocaine are widely available and frequently abused throughout the state; however, crack cocaine is more readily available in larger metropolitan areas such as Phoenix and Tucson. Mexican DTOs and criminal groups dominate the transportation of cocaine into Arizona. They generally smuggle cocaine from Mexico to Arizona through and between POEs along the U.S.–Mexico border. Mexican

DTOs and criminal groups control wholesale powdered cocaine distribution. Hispanic street gangs and African American, Hispanic, and Caucasian independent dealers dominate retail powdered cocaine distribution in Arizona. African American and Hispanic street gangs and independent dealers control the retail distribution of crack cocaine.

Abuse

Cocaine abuse is a concern to Arizona law enforcement agencies. However, there are several indications that cocaine abuse may be declining somewhat in Arizona. Of the 48 Arizona law enforcement respondents to the NDTs 2002, 14 reported high levels of powdered cocaine abuse in their jurisdictions, 13 reported medium levels of abuse, and 8 reported low abuse levels. Thirteen respondents did not rate the level of powdered cocaine abuse in their jurisdictions. In comparison, 14 of 48 law enforcement agencies reported that the levels of crack cocaine abuse were high in their jurisdictions, 8 reported medium levels of abuse, and 12 reported low levels of abuse. Fourteen agencies did not rate the level of crack cocaine abuse in their jurisdictions.

Cocaine-related admissions to publicly funded treatment facilities decreased in 2002. According to TEDS, the number of powdered cocaine-related treatment admissions to publicly funded treatment facilities in Arizona fluctuated between 257 in 1998 and 264 in 2001, then decreased to 200 in 2002. Treatment admissions for crack cocaine abuse more than doubled from 190 in 1998 to 457 in 2001, then decreased dramatically to 185 in 2002.

Cocaine-related emergency department mentions in Phoenix fluctuated between 1997 and 2002. According to DAWN data, cocaine-related ED mentions in the Phoenix metropolitan area increased from 1,337 in 1997 to 1,877 in 1999, then decreased to 1,752 in 2001 and 1,727 in 2002. In 2002 the rate of cocaine-related ED mentions per 100,000 population in the Phoenix metropolitan area (59) was lower than the rate nationwide (78).

Availability

Cocaine is available throughout Arizona. Powdered cocaine is generally available in most areas of the state. Twenty-nine of 48 Arizona law

The number of cocaine-related deaths in Arizona fluctuated in recent years, increasing from 98 in 1997 to 236 in 1999, then decreasing to 213 in 2000 and further to 175 in 2001, according to DAWN. Cocaine was a factor in more deaths from 1998 through 2001 than any other illicit drug.

Cocaine is the second most frequently detected illicit drug (after marijuana) in employment-related screenings in Arizona. According to the Arizona HIDTA, a private testing laboratory conducted 108,562 screenings in 1999, 155,559 in 2000, and 171,845 in 2001. Cocaine was present in 1,584 of the 8,338 positive results in 1999 (19%), 1,998 of the 12,258 positive results in 2000 (16.3%), and 1,926 of the 12,208 positive results in 2001 (15.8%).

Cocaine was the second most frequently detected drug (after marijuana) among adult male arrestees in Tucson and Phoenix in 2001. According to ADAM 2001 data, 35.5 percent of adult male arrestees who were screened for drug abuse in Tucson tested positive for cocaine use. In Phoenix 27.2 percent of adult male arrestees tested positive.

Cocaine abuse is prevalent among adolescents in Arizona. According to the ACJC 2002 State of Arizona Youth Survey, 8.0 percent of junior and senior high school students reported that they had used cocaine at least once in their lifetime. Of the students surveyed, 12.0 percent of Arizona twelfth grade students, 8.2 percent of tenth grade students, and 4.5 percent of eighth grade students reported using cocaine at least once in their lifetime.

enforcement respondents to the NDTs 2002 reported that powdered cocaine was readily available in their jurisdictions. Crack cocaine is also

available in the state, primarily in urban areas such as Phoenix and Tucson. Twenty-five of the 48 Arizona law enforcement respondents to the NDTS 2002 reported that crack cocaine was readily available in their areas.

Cocaine seizures in Arizona have fluctuated in recent years. According to FDSS data, federal law enforcement officials in Arizona seized 6,983 kilograms in 1998, 5,463 kilograms in 1999, 2,579 kilograms in 2000, 3,272 kilograms in

2001, and 2,393 kilograms in 2002. FDSS data indicate that Arizona ranked sixth in the country in terms of the amount of cocaine seized by law enforcement in 2002. In addition, EPIC, which reports drug seizures within 150 miles of the U.S.–Mexico border, also reported fluctuating cocaine seizures in the state. Seizures in Arizona decreased from 5,265 kilograms in 1999 to 2,252 in 2000, increased to 3,034 in 2001, and then decreased to 2,538 in 2002. (See Table 2.)

Table 2. Cocaine Seized Within 150 Miles of the U.S.–Mexico Border, 1999–2002

Kilograms				
	1999	2000	2001	2002
Arizona	5,265	2,252	3,034	2,538
California	7,118	6,001	4,140	3,381
New Mexico	749	219	171	392
Texas	24,137	14,210	12,777	15,998

Source: El Paso Intelligence Center.

According to USSC data for FY2001, the percentage of federal drug sentences in Arizona that were cocaine-related (13.9%) was lower than the national percentage (42.5%). Powdered cocaine-related federal sentences in Arizona (105) were more common than crack cocaine-related federal sentences (18).

Cocaine prices are relatively stable in Arizona. In FY2002 cocaine prices throughout the state varied depending on the area and level of distribution. DEA reported that in the fourth quarter of FY2002, powdered cocaine sold for \$14,500 to \$17,500 per kilogram in Phoenix,

\$14,000 to \$18,000 per kilogram in Tucson, and \$10,000 to \$15,000 per kilogram in Yuma. Powdered cocaine sold for \$400 to \$800 per ounce in Phoenix, \$500 to \$650 per ounce in Tucson, and \$600 to \$1,000 per ounce in Yuma. An eight-ball (one-eighth ounce) of powdered cocaine sold for \$120 to \$150 in Phoenix and \$80 to \$130 in Tucson. (Eight-ball prices were unavailable for Yuma.) Crack cocaine sold for \$500 to \$600 per ounce in Phoenix, \$500 to \$700 per ounce in Tucson, and \$20 per rock in Phoenix, Tucson, and Yuma.

Violence

Violent criminal activity in Arizona has been associated with cocaine distribution, a large percentage of which results from competition among distributors for control of market areas. Arizona law enforcement officials throughout the state

report that much of the cocaine-related violent crime in Arizona involves street gangs, particularly those involved in the distribution of cocaine.

Cocaine Trafficking on Native American Lands

According to the FBI Phoenix Division, some Native American gangs assist Mexican DTOs in transporting drug shipments into and through the Tohono O'odham Nation located along the Arizona portion of the U.S.–Mexico border. These gangs also distribute cocaine on reservation lands. These Native American gangs call themselves Bloods or Crips even though they have no affiliation with the Bloods or Crips outside reservation boundaries. Many reservation residents are afraid to leave their homes after dark because of turf battles and violence associated with the gangs' distribution activities.

Production

Coca is not cultivated nor is cocaine produced in Arizona. Most of the cocaine smuggled into Arizona is produced in South America, primarily Colombia. Retail distributors, however, convert powdered cocaine into crack within the state.

Most of the crack cocaine available in Arizona is converted from powdered cocaine in

Phoenix and Tucson, which serve as distribution centers for smaller cities, towns, and communities throughout Arizona. A wide range of distributors, including Mexican DTOs, Hispanic and African American street gangs, and Hispanic, African American, and Caucasian independent dealers, convert powdered cocaine into crack.

Transportation

Mexican DTOs and criminal groups dominate the transportation of cocaine into and through Arizona. These organizations smuggle cocaine into the state, primarily at or between Arizona POEs along the U.S.–Mexico border. These organizations then transport the drug to stash houses in or near Phoenix and Tucson where it is stored prior to being transported to drug markets within Arizona or in cities outside the state, such as Chicago, Denver, Detroit, and New York.

Cocaine transporters primarily smuggle cocaine overland through Arizona POEs using private and commercial vehicles. The drug typically is concealed in trunks, gas tanks, quarter panels, engines, tires, floors, and seats of private vehicles and in sleeper areas, cargo areas, and modified compartments of tractor-trailers. In 2002, 39 percent of cocaine seized within 150 miles of the Arizona portion of the U.S.–Mexico border was seized at the POEs.

Cocaine transporters also smuggle cocaine overland between the Arizona POEs using backpackers (the most common method), private

vehicles, and couriers on horseback. Backpackers usually work at night in teams of three to eight and are paid \$1,000 to \$1,300 per trip to smuggle cocaine into the United States. One member of the team functions as the guide and is equipped with a gun and a cellular telephone. These teams enter the United States through remote canyons that provide cover for smuggling activities. Once in Arizona the backpackers stash the cocaine at predetermined sites. Usually, one individual remains with the contraband until transporters residing in the United States retrieve the drug. The transporters then move the drug by vehicle to stash locations, primarily in Phoenix or Tucson, or directly to drug markets within and outside Arizona. Mexican DTOs that smuggle cocaine between POEs by private vehicle or by couriers on horseback operate in a similar manner.

Seizure data indicate that cocaine smuggling between Arizona POEs is common. Law enforcement officials seized a larger percentage of cocaine from smugglers operating between POEs in Arizona than any other state along the U.S.–Mexico border.

In 2002 cocaine seized between POEs accounted for 11 percent (279 kg) of total cocaine seizures (2,538 kg) in the Arizona border area. (See Table

3.) Along the entire U.S.–Mexico border, cocaine seized between POEs accounted for only 3 percent of seizures.

Table 3. Cocaine Seized Within 150 Miles of the U.S.–Mexico Border by Location, 2002

Kilograms				
	Between POEs	At POEs	Checkpoints	Other
Arizona	279	981	302	976
California	0	2,358	331	693
New Mexico	24	104	264	0
Texas	365	5,978	6,697	2,959
Total	668	9,421	7,594	4,628

Source: El Paso Intelligence Center.

Cocaine transporters use other means such as tunnels, couriers aboard commercial aircraft and buses, pedestrians, and package delivery services to smuggle cocaine across the U.S.–Mexico border into Arizona. Some Mexican DTOs smuggle cocaine through tunnels that extend from Mexico to buildings in Arizona—particularly Nogales but also Naco and Douglas—where it is stored until it can be transported to stash houses in the state. In February 2001 USCS officials in Nogales seized 381 kilograms of cocaine in a house containing the entrance to a tunnel leading into Mexico. Mexican DTOs that employ couriers on commercial airlines and buses to smuggle cocaine into the state typically route the couriers to Phoenix and Tucson. In 2002 more than 10 pounds of cocaine were seized from passengers at the

Phoenix and Tucson airports. Mexican traffickers use pedestrians to smuggle cocaine on their bodies and increasingly use package delivery services to transport the drug into the state.

Cocaine is transported into Arizona from other states, particularly California. According to law enforcement officials in Phoenix and Flagstaff, cocaine is transported into their jurisdictions from California, particularly Los Angeles. Operation Pipeline data indicate that Arizona law enforcement officials conducted 22 highway cocaine interdictions and seized more than 226 kilograms of cocaine in 2001. California was identified as the state of origin for six of the shipments, ranking second only to Arizona.

Distribution

Mexican DTOs and criminal groups are the primary wholesale distributors of powdered cocaine in Arizona. Caucasian criminal groups, Hispanic street gangs, and local independent dealers also distribute wholesale quantities of cocaine in the state, but to a lesser extent. Crack cocaine typically is not distributed in wholesale quantities in Arizona.

Hispanic street gangs and African American, Hispanic, and Caucasian independent dealers distribute powdered cocaine at the retail level in Arizona. African American and Hispanic street gangs and independent dealers are the primary retail distributors of crack cocaine in the state. The Phoenix Police Department reports that retail powdered and crack cocaine distribution in its

jurisdiction is conducted by African American street gangs such as West Side City, Hispanic street gangs including Wetback Power 21st Street and Wetback Power Hispanic, and independent dealers. The Phoenix Police Department further reports that many retail cocaine distributors in Phoenix sell multiple drugs. The East Side Los Cuatro Milpas gang, a particularly violent Hispanic street gang with approximately 130 members, is involved in retail sales of cocaine, heroin, and marijuana in Phoenix. According to the Tucson Police Department, Hispanic street gangs such as Barrio Libre Brown Mexican Pride and South Park Family Bloods and Caucasian and

Hispanic independent dealers distribute crack cocaine at the retail level in Tucson.

Most retail-level powdered cocaine distribution occurs through street sales and in social venues such as nightclubs. Retail quantities of powdered cocaine typically are packaged in folded papers called bindles, small vials, zip-top bags, or snap-lid plastic containers. Retail-level crack cocaine distribution typically occurs through street sales and in private residences, particularly in rental housing complexes. Crack cocaine generally is packaged in small plastic bags.

Heroin

Heroin poses a considerable threat to Arizona. Mexican black tar heroin is the predominant type available in the state; however, Mexican brown powdered heroin is becoming increasingly available. Mexican DTOs and criminal groups control the transportation and wholesale distribution of

Mexican black tar and brown powdered heroin. Mexican criminal groups, Hispanic street gangs, prison gangs, and local independent dealers dominate retail heroin distribution in Arizona. African American street gangs and OMGs also distribute heroin at the retail level, albeit to a lesser extent.

Abuse

Heroin abuse is a considerable threat to Arizona. Eight of the 48 Arizona law enforcement respondents to the NDTs 2002 reported high levels of heroin abuse in their jurisdictions, 13 reported medium levels of abuse, and 15 reported low levels of abuse. Twelve respondents did not rate the level of heroin abuse in their areas.

TEDS data indicate fluctuating heroin-related treatment admissions to publicly funded facilities from 1998 through 2002: 838 in 1998, 294 in 1999, 380 in 2000, 813 in 2001, and 263 admissions in 2002. However, these data reportedly do not accurately reflect the situation in Arizona due to problems in reporting. The Arizona Department of Health Services Division of Behavioral Health reports that heroin-related admissions have increased from 1998 through 2002, although data are unavailable.

The number of ED mentions for heroin abuse in the Phoenix metropolitan area fluctuated from 1997 through 2002. According to DAWN, there were 827 heroin-related ED mentions in 1997, 873 in 1998, 839 in 1999, 841 in 2000, 777 in 2001, and 672 in 2002. In 2002 the rate of heroin-related ED mentions per 100,000 population in the Phoenix metropolitan area (23) was lower than the rate nationwide (36).

The number of deaths in which heroin was a factor increased from 1997 through 2000, then decreased in 2001. According to DAWN mortality data, the number of heroin-related deaths increased from 106 in 1997 to 171 in 1998, 177 in 1999, and 181 in 2000. Heroin-related deaths then decreased to 140 in 2001. Phoenix ranked seventh in the number of heroin-related deaths among the 33 metropolitan areas reporting to DAWN in 2001.

Employment-related drug screenings reveal a 50 percent increase in positive results for heroin over the past 2 years in Arizona. According to the Arizona HIDTA, a private testing laboratory conducted 108,562 screenings in 1999, 155,559 in 2000, and 171,845 in 2001. Heroin was present in 659 of the 8,338 positive results in 1999 (7.9%), 1,201 of the 12,258 positive results in 2000 (9.8%), and 1,465 of the 12,208 positive results in 2001 (12%).

A relatively small portion of adult male arrestees in Tucson and Phoenix tested positive for opiate use in 2001. According to ADAM program data for 2001, 6 percent of adult male arrestees who were screened for drug abuse in Tucson

tested positive for opiate use, and 6 percent of adult male arrestees tested positive in Phoenix.

Among adolescents in Arizona the abuse of heroin is relatively low compared with other illicit drugs such as methamphetamine, cocaine, and marijuana. According to the ACJC 2002 State of Arizona Youth Survey, 2.9 percent of junior and senior high school students surveyed reported that they had used heroin at least once in their lifetime. Of the students surveyed, 3.8 percent of Arizona twelfth grade students, 3.2 percent of tenth grade students, and 1.9 percent of eighth grade students reported using heroin at least once in their lifetime.

Availability

Heroin is available to varying extents throughout Arizona. Twenty-three of the 48 Arizona law enforcement respondents to the NDTs 2002 reported that heroin was readily available in their jurisdictions while 14 reported low availability. Eleven respondents did not rate the level of heroin availability in their jurisdictions. Mexican black tar heroin is the most prevalent type available in the state. Mexican brown powdered heroin is readily available in Phoenix and Tucson and is becoming increasingly available in other areas of the state. In addition, in some areas, particularly in the southern part of the state, Mexican brown powdered heroin is the predominant type available.

The amount of heroin seized in Arizona is relatively small in comparison with methamphetamine, cocaine, and marijuana. According to FDSS data, law enforcement officials in Arizona seized 66 kilograms of heroin in 1998, 17 kilograms in 1999, 60 kilograms in 2000, 7.9 kilograms in 2001, and 7.5 kilograms in 2002. Much of this heroin was seized within 150 miles of the Arizona portion of the U.S.–Mexico border. Further, EPIC reports that heroin seizures within 150 miles of the border totaled 12 kilograms in 1999, 59 kilograms in 2000, 6.3 kilograms in 2001, and 8.7 kilograms in 2002. The large amount of

seized heroin reported for 2000 in both total seizures and seizures within 150 miles of the Arizona portion of the U.S.–Mexico border includes a 46-kilogram seizure that occurred in the fourth quarter of that year.

The percentage of federal drug sentences that were heroin-related in Arizona was lower than the national percentage in FY2001. According to USSC data, 1.7 percent of federal drug sentences in Arizona in FY2001 were heroin-related compared with 7.2 percent nationally. Moreover, the number of heroin-related federal sentences decreased from 24 in FY1997 to 15 in FY2001.

Heroin prices vary throughout the state depending on the area and level of distribution; prices in Phoenix, Tucson, and Yuma are lower than in rural areas, suggesting higher availability in those cities. According to DEA, in the fourth quarter of FY2002 prices for Mexican black tar heroin ranged from a low of \$60 per gram in Tucson to a high of \$220 per gram in Sierra Vista/Douglas. Prices for ounce quantities of Mexican black tar heroin ranged from \$1,075 to \$2,000, while kilogram quantities ranged from \$25,000 to \$50,000 within the state. (See Table 4.) Prices of Mexican brown powdered heroin are equivalent to those of Mexican black tar heroin.

Table 4. Mexican Black Tar Heroin Prices in Major Arizona Cities, Fourth Quarter FY2002

	Douglas/Sierra Vista	Nogales	Phoenix	Tucson	Yuma
Paper (1/4 gram)	\$100-\$150	\$100	\$20-\$30	\$20-\$25	\$10
Gram	\$180-\$220	\$170	\$80	\$60-\$110	\$100
Ounce	\$1,500-\$2,000	\$1,200	\$1,100-\$1,700	\$1,075-\$1,300	\$1,500-\$2,000
Kilogram	NA	\$42,000	\$42,000-\$50,000	\$43,000	\$25,000-\$45,000

Source: Drug Enforcement Administration Phoenix Division.

Violence

Heroin-related violence occurs throughout Arizona, primarily in connection with heroin distribution. Mexican DTOs, criminal groups, street gangs, and independent dealers often engage in violent criminal activity to protect their heroin distribution operations. In March 2000 a man suspected of being a member of a Mexican heroin trafficking group was shot and killed by three men who kicked their way into his home. Phoenix Police Department officials identified the three suspects as members of a rival heroin trafficking group

suspected of smuggling large quantities of black tar heroin into the Phoenix area from Mexico.

Heroin abuse generally is not associated with violent criminal activity in Arizona; however, heroin abusers periodically commit property crimes in an attempt to acquire money to purchase heroin. According to the DEA Phoenix Division, heroin is the least likely drug to be detected in a homicide victim or recovered from a homicide scene.

Production

Opium is not cultivated nor is heroin produced in Arizona. Heroin is produced in four primary source regions: Mexico, South America,

Southeast Asia, and Southwest Asia. According to Arizona law enforcement authorities, the heroin available in Arizona is produced in Mexico.

Transportation

Mexican DTOs and criminal groups dominate the smuggling of Mexican black tar and brown powdered heroin into Arizona. These DTOs and criminal groups typically smuggle Mexican black tar and brown powdered heroin into Arizona through and between POEs along the Arizona portion of the U.S.–Mexico border. In addition, Mexican DTOs and criminal groups transport

heroin into Arizona from other states, particularly California. For instance, law enforcement officials in Mohave and La Paz Counties report California as the primary source area for Mexican black tar heroin in their jurisdictions. Much of the heroin smuggled into Arizona is destined for markets outside the state.

Mexican DTOs and criminal groups use a variety of methods to smuggle heroin into Arizona. They primarily smuggle Mexican black tar and brown powdered heroin into the state using couriers who conceal the drug on their bodies and cross the border on foot or in private vehicles. Mexican DTOs and criminal groups also smuggle heroin into the state concealed in hidden compartments

within commercial and private vehicles, concealed in luggage, and intermingled with legitimate cargo. Typical concealment areas in vehicles include bumpers, engine compartments, gas tanks, and spare tires. Traffickers also transport heroin into Arizona using couriers aboard commercial aircraft and buses as well as via package delivery services.

Distribution

Mexican DTOs and criminal groups are the primary wholesale distributors of Mexican black tar and brown powdered heroin throughout Arizona. Jamaican criminal groups, Hispanic street gangs, prison gangs such as the Mexican Mafia, and local independent dealers also distribute heroin at the wholesale level, but to a lesser extent. In June 2000 DEA and FBI reported the arrest of approximately 270 individuals involved in a Mexico-based black tar heroin distribution organization. The organization supplied 36 kilograms of heroin each month to distribution cells in 22 U.S. cities, including Phoenix and Yuma. Also in 2000 DEA Phoenix Division officials disrupted a Jamaican criminal group based in Arizona that used sophisticated drug cells to distribute heroin and marijuana throughout Arizona. The group also transported these drugs to distribution networks in the Midwest and on the East Coast.

Mexican criminal groups, Hispanic street gangs, prison gangs, and local independent dealers

dominate retail heroin distribution in Arizona. African American street gangs and OMGs also distribute heroin at the retail level. In Phoenix Mexican criminal groups, African American street gangs such as West Side City, Hispanic street gangs such as Sinaloan Cowboys and Wetback Power 21st Street, and Hispanic local independent dealers distribute heroin at the retail level. In Tempe the Hispanic street gang La Victoria Locos is a primary retail distributor of heroin. In Tucson Hispanic local independent dealers control most retail distribution; the Devils Diciples OMG also distributes heroin at the retail level, but to a lesser extent.

Heroin packaging varies depending on the amount distributed. Wholesale quantities of heroin typically are wrapped in cellophane, masking tape, or black electrical tape. Retail quantities typically are packaged in either “bindles” or balloons. A bindle is a dosage unit of heroin wrapped in packaging paper, often cellophane, and tied at one end.

Marijuana

Marijuana is a significant drug threat to Arizona. Marijuana produced in Mexico is the predominant type available throughout Arizona. Locally produced marijuana and Canada-produced marijuana, commonly called BC Bud, are also available, but to a lesser extent. Cannabis cultivation occurs within the state and generally is controlled by Caucasian and Hispanic criminal groups and independent producers. Mexican DTOs and criminal groups dominate the smuggling of marijuana from Mexico into Arizona.

Mexican DTOs and criminal groups control wholesale distribution of marijuana produced in Mexico; Hispanic street gangs and Caucasian, African American, and Hispanic local independent dealers control retail distribution of the drug. Caucasian and Hispanic criminal groups and independent dealers are the primary wholesale and retail distributors of locally produced marijuana in Arizona. Caucasian independent dealers are the primary retail distributors of the limited quantities of BC Bud available in the state.

Abuse

Marijuana is the most commonly abused illicit drug in Arizona. Of the 48 Arizona law enforcement respondents to the NDTs 2002, 29 reported high levels of marijuana abuse in their jurisdictions, 6 reported medium levels of abuse, and 1 reported a low level of abuse. Twelve respondents did not rate the level of marijuana abuse in their jurisdictions.

Marijuana abuse in Arizona is a concern to treatment providers. Marijuana-related admissions to publicly funded treatment facilities in Arizona increased each year from 1998 through 2001, then decreased in 2002. According to TEDS, the number of treatment admissions for marijuana abuse increased from 634 in 1998 to 757 in 1999, to 790 in 2000, to 1,003 in 2001, then decreased to 610 in 2002. The number of marijuana-related admissions was greater than for any other drug in 1999 and 2000.

The number of marijuana-related ED mentions in the Phoenix metropolitan area increased from 741 in 1997 to 1,366 in 2002, according to DAWN data. The rate of marijuana-related ED mentions per 100,000 population in the Phoenix metropolitan area (46) was slightly lower than the rate nationwide (47) in 2002.

Availability

Marijuana is the most readily available illicit drug in Arizona. Of the 48 Arizona law enforcement respondents to the NDTs 2002, 38 reported that marijuana was readily available in their jurisdictions. Ten respondents did not rate the level of marijuana availability in their jurisdictions. Marijuana produced in Mexico is the predominant type available in the state. Marijuana produced in Arizona is also available, but to a lesser extent. Limited quantities of high-grade BC Bud from Canada are available in some areas of state.

Marijuana is the most frequently detected illicit drug in employment-related drug screenings. According to the Arizona HIDTA, a private testing laboratory conducted 108,562 screenings in 1999, 155,559 in 2000, and 171,845 in 2001. Marijuana was present in 3,227 of the 8,338 positive results in 1999 (38.7%), 4,707 of the 12,258 positive results in 2000 (38.4%), and 4,518 of positive results in 2001 (37%).

Marijuana is the most frequently detected illicit drug among adult male arrestees in Phoenix and Tucson. According to the ADAM program, in 2001, 39.7 percent of adult male arrestees who were screened for drug abuse in Phoenix tested positive for marijuana use. In Tucson 43.4 percent of adult male arrestees tested positive.

Marijuana is the illicit drug most widely abused by adolescents in Arizona. According to the ACJC 2002 State of Arizona Youth Survey, 38.8 percent of junior and senior high school students surveyed reported that they had used marijuana at least once in their lifetime, a higher percentage than for any other drug. Of the students surveyed, 50.8 percent of Arizona twelfth grade students, 41.6 percent of tenth grade students, and 26.6 percent of eighth grade students reported using marijuana at least once in their lifetime.

Marijuana seizure amounts are high in Arizona. According to FDSS data, law enforcement officials in Arizona seized 148,344 kilograms of marijuana in 1998, 173,832 kilograms in 1999, 199,414 kilograms in 2000, 219,155 kilograms in 2001, and 248,372 kilograms in 2002. FDSS data indicate that Arizona ranked second in the nation after Texas for the amount of marijuana seized in 2001 and 2002. Arizona law enforcement officials seize more marijuana than any other drug; it accounted for 99 percent of total drug seizures in 2002. Moreover, the amount of marijuana seized within

150 miles of the Arizona portion of the U.S.–Mexico border has increased each year from 1999 through 2002. According to EPIC, such seizures

increased 45 percent from 169,586 kilograms in 1999 to 246,161 kilograms in 2002. (See Table 5.)

Table 5. Marijuana Seized Within 150 Miles of the U.S.–Mexico Border, 1999–2002

	Kilograms			
	1999	2000	2001	2002
Arizona	169,586	197,036	212,229	246,161
California	191,569	230,110	202,046	126,789
New Mexico	35,079	45,209	51,527	37,347
Texas	402,567	654,141	592,771	604,993

Source: El Paso Intelligence Center.

Officials with USCS frequently seize large shipments of marijuana being smuggled into Arizona. In February 2003 USCS agents seized 3,528 pounds of marijuana concealed in a shipment of spaghetti squash in a tractor-trailer entering Arizona at the Nogales POE. Other large shipments of marijuana seized at the Nogales POE include 2,527 pounds concealed in a tractor-trailer seized by USCS officials in June 2002, 5,272 pounds in a tractor-trailer seized in January 2001, and 8,472 pounds seized from a tractor-trailer in November 2000.

The percentage of drug-related federal sentences that were marijuana-related in Arizona was more than double the national percentage in FY2001. According to USSC data, 76.3 percent of drug-related federal sentences in Arizona in

FY2001 were marijuana-related, compared with 32.8 percent nationally. Moreover, marijuana accounted for a higher percentage of drug-related federal sentences in Arizona than in any other state in FY2001.

Marijuana prices have remained relatively stable in Arizona since FY2000; however, prices do vary throughout the state. Prices are lower in the southern areas of the state, including Tucson and Yuma, than in northern cities such as Flagstaff. According to DEA, in Yuma ounce quantities of marijuana sold for \$40 to \$100 and pound quantities sold for \$300 to \$400 during the fourth quarter of FY2002. Ounce quantities of marijuana sold for \$100 to \$175 in Flagstaff while pound quantities sold for \$750 to \$1,000 during the same period. (See Table 6.)

Table 6. Marijuana Prices in Selected Arizona Cities, Fourth Quarter FY2002

	Flagstaff	Phoenix	Tucson	Yuma
7 grams	\$35-\$50	\$10-\$25	\$5-\$10	NA
Ounce	\$100-\$175	\$75-\$150	\$65-\$105	\$40-\$100
Pound	\$750-\$1,000	\$500-\$750	\$400-\$600	\$300-\$400

Source: Drug Enforcement Administration Phoenix Division.

Violence

Marijuana-related violence in Arizona occurs periodically, usually in connection with production, transportation, or distribution of the drug. Law enforcement officials report that cannabis cultivators sometimes use animal traps, armed guards, explosive devices, guard dogs, and trip wires to secure their production sites. Mexican DTOs frequently employ violent measures to protect their drug shipments and prevent law

enforcement interference, including placing armed lookouts in key smuggling areas along the border. Marijuana traffickers also frequently attempt to evade interdiction by law enforcement officers, running into them with their vehicles or shooting at them. Street gangs that distribute marijuana often commit drive-by shootings, home invasions, assaults, and extortion in connection with marijuana distribution operations.

Production

Most of the marijuana available in Arizona is produced in Mexico; however, cannabis is cultivated in the state to a limited extent. Within the state cannabis cultivation generally is controlled by Caucasian and Hispanic criminal groups and independent producers. Cannabis is cultivated in Arizona at both indoor and outdoor grow sites.

Most locally produced marijuana is produced from cannabis cultivated at outdoor grow sites. Outdoor grow sites in Arizona frequently are located in forests or along riverbeds. According to the DEA Domestic Cannabis Eradication/Suppression Program (DCE/SP), there were 5,019 plants seized

from outdoor grow sites in 1998 and 3,345 plants seized in 2002. (The number of plants seized from outdoor cultivation operations in 1998 was atypically high because a large grow site was targeted multiple times, yielding several large seizures.)

Indoor cannabis grows are not a significant source of marijuana in Arizona. Indoor grows are typically small (5 to 15 plants). The marijuana produced is mostly for personal consumption. According to the DCE/SP, the number of plants seized by law enforcement officials in Arizona from indoor grow operations increased from 251 in 1998 to 492 in 2002.

Transportation

Mexican DTOs and criminal groups dominate the smuggling of marijuana from Mexico into Arizona. They typically smuggle marijuana across the U.S.–Mexico border between and through the Arizona POEs and transport the drug to drug markets within the state and throughout the country.

Marijuana transporters primarily smuggle the drug from Mexico into Arizona using backpackers and couriers on horseback that travel between the POEs. Backpackers typically travel in groups of 6 to 10 and carry 30 to 50 pounds of marijuana each. Officials with the U.S. Border Patrol (USBP)—now part of CBP—report that backpackers are

increasingly traveling in larger groups; in February 2003 officials encountered a group of 28 backpackers carrying marijuana. Couriers on horseback generally travel in groups of 5 to 10 and transport marijuana over rough, mountainous trails. Once the marijuana is smuggled into the state, these individuals stash the drug at prearranged locations near roads and highways in the desert to be retrieved by another member of the smuggling organization. Most of the marijuana seizures along the Arizona portion of the U.S.–Mexico border are of stashed shipments.

Seizure data indicate that marijuana smuggling between Arizona POEs is common. Arizona law enforcement officials seized a larger percentage of marijuana from smugglers operating between POEs in Arizona than in any other state along the U.S.–Mexico border. In 2002 marijuana

seized between POEs accounted for 50 percent (122,989 kg) of total marijuana seizures (246,161) in the Arizona border area. Along the U.S.–Mexico border (excluding Arizona), marijuana seized between POEs accounted for only 17 percent of seizures. (See Table 7.)

Table 7. Marijuana Seized Within 150 Miles of the U.S.–Mexico Border by Location, 2002

Kilograms				
	Between POEs	At POEs	Checkpoints	Other
Arizona	122,989	21,132	75,060	26,980
California	8,962	98,410	12,054	7,363
New Mexico	7,158	10,507	18,160	1,523
Texas	118,429	148,269	247,903	90,392
Total	257,538	278,318	353,177	126,258

Source: El Paso Intelligence Center.

Marijuana Smuggling on Native American and Public Lands

Marijuana transporters extensively use Native American and public lands to smuggle marijuana into the United States across the Arizona portion of the U.S.–Mexico border.

Tohono O’Odham Nation. Traffickers use the Tohono O’Odham Nation area to smuggle drugs, primarily marijuana, into the United States. The DEA Phoenix Division reported that law enforcement officials seize approximately 1,000 pounds of marijuana each day in the Nation. In April 2002 USCS officials seized two large shipments of marijuana in the Tohono O’Odham Nation. The first seizure netted 9,000 pounds of marijuana; the second netted nearly 6,000 pounds.

Coronado National Forest (particularly near the Coronado National Memorial). Marijuana transporters smuggle multihundred-pound shipments of marijuana through the Coronado National Forest daily. To combat smuggling within the Coronado National Forest, USBP cleared vegetation along the park’s border with Mexico and illuminated the area with stadium lights to make it more difficult for smugglers to enter Arizona undetected.

Organ Pipe Cactus National Monument. Marijuana is increasingly transported through the park, and park officials report that illegal users of the park now outnumber legitimate hikers and campers by an estimated 10 to 1. Highway 85 makes the park an attractive smuggling and transportation route; it bisects the park and links the Lukeville POE along the Arizona portion of the U.S.–Mexico border with I-8 and I-10, two major east-west routes.

Marijuana transporters also smuggle marijuana from Mexico into Arizona in commercial and private vehicles. DTOs typically conceal marijuana in specially designed hidden compartments within these vehicles. Typical concealment areas include bumpers, tires, gas tanks, quarter

panels, seats, spare tires, and engine compartments. Marijuana transporters also conceal the marijuana in duffel bags or luggage within the trunk or on the floor or seat of the vehicle. They also commingle marijuana with legitimate cargo such as fruits and vegetables.

Marijuana transporters also use underground tunnels that extend from Mexico into the United States to smuggle the drug. Law enforcement officials in border towns frequently discover tunnels—either new tunnels or previously sealed tunnels that have been reopened—that are used to smuggle marijuana. In January 2003 three tunnels that originated at the same drainage basin in Mexico were discovered in Nogales. In addition, marijuana transporters use couriers aboard commercial aircraft and buses, freight trains and, to an increasing extent, package delivery services to smuggle the drug into the state.

Arizona is a primary transshipment area for marijuana destined for markets throughout the country. Once smuggled into the state, marijuana shipments are transported to stash houses, primarily in Phoenix and Tucson, for consolidation and transport throughout the state and the country. Stash houses typically contain between 500 and 1,000 pounds of marijuana; however, larger quantities also are stored at these sites. For instance, in December 2002 USCS and Arizona Department of Public Safety officials seized more than 4,200 pounds of marijuana from a stash house in South-east Phoenix. Traffickers transport marijuana from these stash locations to various cities throughout the country, such as Baltimore, Boston, Chicago, Cincinnati, Cleveland, Columbus, Detroit, Indianapolis, Los Angeles, New York, Philadelphia, and St. Louis. Additionally, traffickers, particularly Jamaican criminal groups and

Distribution

Mexican DTOs and criminal groups dominate wholesale distribution of Mexico-produced marijuana throughout Arizona. Jamaican criminal groups and Caucasian local independent dealers also distribute Mexico-produced marijuana at the wholesale level. Caucasian and Hispanic criminal groups and independent dealers are the primary wholesale and retail distributors of locally produced marijuana within the state. Caucasian independent dealers distribute limited quantities of BC Bud in the state.

Young People Used to Smuggle Marijuana

Mexican DTOs increasingly are using juveniles to smuggle marijuana across the Arizona portion of the U.S.–Mexico border. Immigration and Naturalization Service (now Bureau of Immigration and Customs Enforcement) authorities at the Nogales POE reported that at least two Mexican DTOs use juvenile couriers to smuggle marijuana and cocaine into the United States. The juveniles are clean-cut, well-dressed individuals who resemble students. Each typically is paid between \$50 and \$100 per trip to bodycarry 5-pound drug shipments across the border. In March 2002 USCS agents seized 6 pounds of marijuana from a 17-year-old at the Nogales POE; the youth had smuggled the drug for a Mexican couple who recruits juveniles in Mexico to smuggle marijuana into Arizona for the DTO. The youth was paid \$50 per trip and was scheduled to make five trips across the border that day.

various independent dealers from drug markets located throughout the country, frequently travel to Central Arizona to purchase marijuana and then transport it back to their areas for distribution. According to Operation Pipeline, Arizona was identified as the source of supply in 15 percent of marijuana highway interdictions conducted in 2001. Arizona ranked third, with 97 interdictions, after Texas (276) and California (113).

Hispanic street gangs and Caucasian, African American, and Hispanic local independent dealers distribute marijuana at the retail level in Arizona. Jamaican, Mexican, and Caucasian criminal groups and OMGs also distribute marijuana at the retail level, but to a lesser extent. In Flagstaff Caucasian independent dealers dominate the retail distribution of marijuana; Mexican criminal groups and local street gangs also distribute the drug at the retail level. In Phoenix Hispanic street gangs such as Wetback Power

Hispanic and Wetback Power 21st Street are the primary retail-level distributors of marijuana; however, Caucasian and Jamaican criminal groups, local independent dealers, and OMGs also serve as retail distributors. Hispanic street gangs such as South Park Family Gangsters and South Side Posse Bloods and local independent dealers control retail distribution in Tucson. Local independent dealers are the primary retail distributors in Yuma, according to the Yuma Police Department;

however, the Hells Angels OMG also distributes retail quantities, but to a lesser extent.

Marijuana packaging varies depending on the amount distributed. Wholesale quantities are often compressed into brick-shaped packages using hydraulic presses and then wrapped in packaging tape, plastic wrap, or another material for wholesale distribution. Retail quantities of marijuana commonly are packaged in small plastic bags.

Other Dangerous Drugs

Other dangerous drugs (ODDs) include club drugs such as MDMA, GHB and its analogs, ketamine, the hallucinogens LSD and PCP, and Rohypnol. ODDs also include inhalants and diverted pharmaceuticals. MDMA is readily available and abused in Arizona and poses a considerable threat to the state. Other ODDs present varying threats to Arizona. Various criminal groups and independent dealers transport ODDs to Arizona via private vehicles, couriers on commercial and private aircraft, couriers traveling by foot entering the United States from Mexico, and package delivery services. Club

drugs primarily are sold and abused by middle-class, suburban, young adults at raves and nightclubs and on college campuses. Hallucinogens are also distributed by local independent dealers throughout the state. Pharmaceuticals such as hydrocodone (Vicodin), benzodiazepine (Valium, Xanax), oxycodone (OxyContin, Percocet, Percodan), steroids, and codeine typically are diverted through a variety of techniques including “doctor shopping,” pharmacy diversion, prescription forgery, smuggling from Mexico, and purchasing over the Internet, particularly from foreign sources such as Mexico.

Club Drugs

Club drugs consist of illicit drugs that are commonly diverted and used at dance clubs and raves, including MDMA, GHB and its analogs, ketamine, LSD, PCP, and Rohypnol. Club drugs are becoming increasingly popular in Arizona, particularly among teenagers and young adults. Club drugs are a major concern among law enforcement and health professionals in Arizona, who report increasing availability and use. According to the 2001 ACJC Survey of Narcotics Officers, 80 percent of respondents reported club drug abuse as a problem in their jurisdictions and 78 percent reported investigations involving club drugs. The increasing number of incidents involving MDMA abuse is of particular concern.

MDMA. Also known as Adam, ecstasy, XTC, E, and X, MDMA (3,4-methylenedioxy-methamphetamine) is a stimulant and low-level

hallucinogen. The drug was patented in 1914 in Germany, where it was sometimes given to psychiatric patients to assist in psychotherapy, a practice never approved by the American Psychological Association or the Food and Drug Administration. MDMA, sometimes called the hug drug, is said to make users “feel good”; they claim that the drug helps them to be more “in touch” with others and that it “opens channels of communication.” However, abuse of the drug can cause psychological problems similar to those associated with methamphetamine and cocaine abuse, including confusion, depression, sleeplessness, anxiety, and paranoia. Negative physical effects can also result, including muscle tension, involuntary teeth clenching, blurred vision, and increased heart rate and blood pressure. MDMA abuse

Raves

Throughout the 1990s high energy, all-night dances known as raves, which feature techno music and flashing laser lights, increased in popularity among teens and young adults. Raves typically occur in permanent dance clubs or temporary weekend event sites set up in abandoned warehouses, open fields, empty buildings, or civic centers. Club drugs are a group of synthetic drugs often sold at raves and dance clubs. MDMA is one of the most popular club drugs. Rave managers often sell water, pacifiers, and glow sticks at rave parties. "Ravers" require water to offset dehydration caused by MDMA abuse; use pacifiers to avoid grinding their teeth—a common side effect of MDMA abuse; and wave glow sticks in front of their eyes because MDMA stimulates light perception.

can also cause a marked increase in body temperature leading to muscle breakdown, kidney failure, cardiovascular system failure, stroke, or seizure as reported in some fatal cases. Researchers suggest that MDMA abuse may result in long-term and sometimes permanent damage to parts of the brain that are critical to thought and memory.

MDMA abuse is growing in Arizona. According to the DEA Phoenix Division, MDMA abuse is expanding beyond the nightclub scene due to abuser perceptions that the drug is not dangerous. DAWN data indicate that MDMA ED mentions in the Phoenix metropolitan area increased dramatically from 6 in 1997 to 96 in 2001. Increasing MDMA availability in suburban and rural areas contributes to the threat.

MDMA abuse is fairly common among youth in Arizona. According to the ACJC 2002 State of Arizona Youth Survey, 8.3 percent of junior and senior high school students surveyed in 2002 reported that they had used MDMA at least once in their lifetime; only marijuana and inhalants had higher percentages of reported use. Of the students surveyed, 12.0 percent of twelfth grade students, 8.2 percent of tenth grade students, and 5.5 percent

of eighth grade students in Arizona reported using MDMA at least once in their lifetime.

MDMA is widely available in virtually all major metropolitan areas such as Phoenix and Tucson. In addition, availability is increasing in suburban areas and smaller towns, according to law enforcement officials throughout the state. Moreover, the Scottsdale Police Department reported that MDMA is the most prevalent drug of abuse in its jurisdiction.

Most of the MDMA available in Arizona is produced in the Netherlands and Belgium; however, MDMA also is produced to a very limited extent in Arizona. In October 2001 law enforcement officials arrested a college professor for producing MDMA. He had purchased precursor chemicals through the college and used equipment from the college to produce the drug. The man distributed the drug within Arizona and in California and Idaho. In May 2000 law enforcement officials seized an MDMA laboratory operated by Caucasian college students in Flagstaff.

MDMA is smuggled into Arizona from Europe and, to an increasing extent, from Mexico and transported from states such as California and Nevada, primarily by Israeli and Asian criminal groups. Mexican DTOs also smuggle MDMA across the Arizona portion of the U.S.–Mexico border, but to a much lesser extent. MDMA is transported using a variety of means such as couriers on foot entering the United States from Mexico, couriers traveling on commercial and private aircraft, private vehicles, and package delivery services. Couriers are increasingly transporting MDMA from Europe into Mexico by air and then smuggling it across the Arizona portion of the U.S.–Mexico border by vehicle to avoid customs officials at airports. Independent dealers and abusers often travel to border towns in Mexico to purchase MDMA. The drug is transported from Las Vegas and Los Angeles primarily by private vehicle. MDMA increasingly is being transported into the state by package delivery services.

Asian and Caucasian criminal groups and independent dealers are the primary wholesale and retail distributors of MDMA in Arizona. OMGs such as Hells Angels and street gangs such as Devil Dogs also distribute MDMA at the retail level. Many retail-level MDMA distributors are middle- and upper-middle-class Caucasian high school or college age students. MDMA distribution at the retail level typically occurs at the point of use such as raves or bars. According to DEA, in the fourth quarter of FY2002 MDMA sold for \$5 per tablet for 10,000 tablets, \$7 to \$10 per tablet for 1,000 tablets, and \$20 to \$25 for a single tablet.

GHB and Analogs. GHB (gamma-hydroxybutyrate) and its analogs (see text box) pose a low but increasing drug threat to Arizona. GHB is a depressant that occurs naturally in the body and is necessary for complete functioning of the brain and central nervous system. GHB analogs are drugs that possess chemical structures that closely resemble GHB. GHB and its analogs also are known as liquid MDMA, scoop, grievous bodily harm, and Georgia home boy. GHB and its analogs increasingly have been involved in poisonings, overdoses, and fatalities nationwide. Overdoses can occur quickly; some signs include drowsiness, nausea, vomiting, loss of consciousness, impaired breathing, and sometimes death. GHB and its analogs often are used in the commission of drug-facilitated sexual assault because of their sedative properties. The drugs are eliminated from the body quickly, which makes it difficult for healthcare professionals to detect them using blood and urine screenings. In the Phoenix metropolitan area GHB-related ED mentions decreased from 19 in 2001 to 14 in 2002, according to DAWN.

GHB is sold and abused at social venues such as bars, nightclubs, and raves and on college campuses. Caucasian adolescents and young adults are the predominant distributors and abusers of GHB. Law enforcement officials throughout Arizona have reported increased availability and abuse of GHB in their jurisdictions, particularly in small towns.

Law enforcement officials in Arizona report the availability of GBL (gamma-butyrolactone), an analog of GHB, in the state. GBL is used legitimately as a wax stripper or health supplement. It is widely sold in powder and liquid form at gyms, fitness centers, health food stores, and via the Internet. In March 2000 Arizona law enforcement officials arrested a Phoenix man who sold GBL nationwide over the Internet. He bought 55-gallon drums from distributors for \$1,000 and sold the drums for \$3,200 each. He also sold GBL in 25-pound containers for \$400 each. He used package delivery services to transport 55-gallon drums of GBL to distributors in cities throughout the United States including Albuquerque, Boca Raton (FL), Boston, Chicago, Detroit, and Lansdale (PA). Law enforcement officials seized 33 55-gallon drums of GBL from the operation.

GHB Analogs	
Analog	Chemical/Alternative Name
GBL	gamma-butyrolactone furanone di-hydro dihydrofuranone
BD	1,4-butanediol tetramethylene glycol sucol-B butylene glycol
GVL	gamma-valerolactone 4-pentanolide
GHV	gamma-hydroxyvalerate methyl-GHB

Ketamine. The threat posed to Arizona by the distribution and abuse of ketamine is relatively stable. Ketamine, also known as K, special K, vitamin K, ket, kit-kat, and cat valium, is sold commercially as Ketalar. Ketamine was placed on the Schedule III controlled substance list in the United States on July 13, 1999. However, the drug is still available over the counter in Mexico, where it is known as Kelar. It is an injectable anesthetic that has been approved for both human and animal use. Ketamine is produced in liquid, powder, or tablet form. In its liquid form, it can be injected either intramuscularly or intravenously. In powdered

form, ketamine can be mistaken for cocaine or methamphetamine and often is snorted or smoked with marijuana or tobacco products.

High doses of ketamine can cause delirium, amnesia, impaired motor function, high blood pressure, depression, and potentially fatal respiratory problems. Low doses impair attention, learning ability, and memory. Short-term use of ketamine causes hallucinations; its major effect is dissociation, which includes out-of-body and near-death experiences. Ketamine gained popularity among abusers in the 1980s when it was discovered that large doses caused effects similar to those experienced with PCP. According to DAWN, ketamine-related ED mentions in the Phoenix metropolitan area increased from 4 in 2001 to 13 in 2002.

Ketamine is available in Arizona and typically is sold at nightclubs and raves. Several police departments throughout Arizona have reported increased availability and abuse of the drug. Ketamine is predominantly abused by young adults and often is abused with MDMA, a practice known as trail-mixing. Caucasian local independent dealers are the primary distributors of ketamine in the state; however, the Phoenix Police Department reports that Asian local independent dealers also distribute the drug. Distributors typically purchase ketamine at pharmacies in Mexican border towns and smuggle it into Arizona or divert the drug from legitimate sources, primarily veterinary clinics. Law enforcement officials seized 3,544 bottles of ketamine in February 2002 and 3,970 bottles of ketamine in January 2002 during vehicle interdictions in northern Arizona.

LSD. The distribution and abuse of LSD (lysergic acid diethylamide) pose a low threat to Arizona. LSD, also known as acid, boomers, and yellow sunshine, is a hallucinogen that induces abnormalities in sensory perceptions. The effects of LSD are unpredictable depending upon the amount taken, the environment in which it is abused, and the abuser's personality, mood, and expectations. Abusers may feel the immediate effects for up to 12 hours. The physical effects

include dilated pupils, higher body temperature, increased heart rate and blood pressure, sweating, loss of appetite, nausea, numbness, weakness, insomnia, dry mouth, and tremors. Two long-term disorders associated with LSD are persistent psychosis and flashbacks. According to DAWN, LSD-related ED mentions in the Phoenix metropolitan area increased from 71 in 1997 to 156 in 1999, then decreased to 62 in 2001 and 15 in 2002.

LSD is primarily available in urban areas of Arizona; however, its availability is increasing in some suburban areas and smaller towns. Most of the LSD available in Arizona is produced in California and is transported into the state by local independent dealers in private vehicles. Caucasian young adults are the primary distributors and abusers of LSD in the state. The Phoenix Police Department reports that Asian independent dealers also distribute the drug in its jurisdiction. The drug is predominantly sold at raves, bars, nightclubs, and on college campuses. LSD is typically available as powder, liquid, tablets, capsules, gel tabs, and on pieces of blotter paper that absorb the drug.

LSD prices vary depending on the quantity purchased. According to DEA, one dosage unit of blotter LSD sold for \$2 to \$3, while liquid LSD in breath mint bottles (approximately 90 dosage units) sold for \$140 to \$150 per bottle in the second quarter of FY2002.

PCP. The distribution and abuse of the hallucinogen PCP (phencyclidine) pose a low but increasing threat to Arizona, particularly Phoenix. PCP was developed as an intravenous anesthetic, but use of the drug in humans was discontinued in 1965 because patients became agitated, delusional, and irrational while recovering from its effects. PCP, also known as angel dust, embalming fluid, ozone, wack, and rocket fuel, is produced illegally in laboratories in the United States. It is a white crystalline powder that is soluble in water and has a bitter taste. The drug can be mixed with dyes and is available as a tablet, capsule, liquid, or colored powder.

PCP may be snorted, smoked, injected, or swallowed. When smoked, PCP often is applied to mint, parsley, oregano, tobacco, or marijuana. When combined with marijuana, the mixture is called killer joint or crystal supergrass. PCP also is administered by dipping a marijuana cigarette in a solution of PCP-laced embalming fluid and smoking it. This combination is known as fry or amp.

PCP is available primarily in Phoenix; it is available in other areas of Arizona, but to a much lesser extent. In the Phoenix metropolitan area, PCP-related ED mentions increased from 40 in 1997 to 61 in 2001 and 83 in 2002, according to DAWN. Most PCP in Arizona is produced in California and transported into the state primarily by local independent dealers in private vehicles. Local independent dealers are the primary distributors of PCP in the state. However, the Phoenix Police Department reported that street gangs distribute PCP in its jurisdiction. PCP typically is distributed at the same venues as club drugs and primarily is abused by young adults.

Hallucinogen Abuse

Hallucinogen abuse among adolescents and young adults is a concern in Arizona. According to the ACJC 2002 State of Arizona Youth Survey, 7.4 percent of junior and senior high school students surveyed reported that they had used LSD/hallucinogens at least once in their lifetime. Of the students surveyed, 12.6 percent of twelfth grade students, 8.3 percent of tenth grade students, and 2.4 percent of eighth grade students in Arizona reported using LSD/hallucinogens at least once in their lifetime. Hallucinogens ranked second (after marijuana) for the highest percentage of twelfth grade students who reported having tried the drugs.

Rohypnol. Rohypnol (flunitrazepam) is a low but increasing drug threat to Arizona. Rohypnol, also called roofies, rophies, Roche, and the forget-me pill, belongs to a class of drugs known as benzodiazepines, which also includes Valium, Halcion, Xanax, and Versed. Rohypnol is not approved for prescription use in the United States. Rohypnol is odorless, tasteless, and dissolves completely in liquid. It produces sedative-hypnotic effects including muscle relaxation and amnesia and can cause physiological and psychological dependence. Rohypnol often is used in the commission of drug-facilitated sexual assaults because of its sedative properties. The effects of Rohypnol can impair or incapacitate a victim for 8 to 12 hours and are exacerbated by the use of alcohol.

Rohypnol is predominantly abused by young adults in Arizona. Several police departments throughout Arizona have reported increased availability and abuse of the drug. Caucasian local independent dealers are the primary distributors of Rohypnol in the state; however, the Yuma Police Department reports that Hispanic street gangs also distribute the drug. Distributors typically purchase Rohypnol at pharmacies in Mexican border towns and smuggle it into Arizona for personal use and distribution. La Paz County law enforcement officials reported that Rohypnol has been used in the commission of sexual assaults in their jurisdiction.

Inhalants

Inhalant abuse among Arizona youth is a significant problem. Inhalant abuse, also known as huffing, is the sniffing of common household products such as paint, gasoline, and hair spray.

Sniffing inhalants introduces toxins into the body that can damage the liver, lungs, kidney, and brain or even cause death. According to the ACJC 2002 State of Arizona Youth Survey, 10.9 percent of

junior and senior high school students surveyed reported that they had used inhalants at least once in their lifetime. Of the students surveyed, 10.1 percent of Arizona twelfth grade students, 10.4 percent of tenth grade students, and 11.9 percent of eighth grade students reported using inhalants at least once in their lifetime. Inhalants ranked second to marijuana for the highest percentage of eighth and tenth grade students who reported having tried these substances.

Nitrous Oxide Use

Often abused by adolescents in Arizona, nitrous oxide is a clear, colorless gas that is used as an anesthetic and as a propellant in the food industry. When the gas is inhaled, it is quickly absorbed by the lungs and distributed throughout the body. Short-term effects include headaches, dizziness, slurred speech, imbalance when walking, immunity to stimuli such as pain or loud noises, and unconsciousness. Death can occur in a matter of minutes if a person inhales nitrous oxide in a confined space such as a small room or an automobile.

Side effects associated with the abuse of inhalants include dizziness, strong hallucinations, delusions, belligerence, apathy, and impaired judgment. Long-term abusers experience

additional problems including weight loss, muscle weakness, disorientation, inattentiveness, lack of coordination, irritability, and depression. Chronic inhalant abuse may cause serious and sometimes irreversible damage to the user's heart, liver, kidneys, lungs, and brain. Brain damage may result in personality changes, diminished cognitive functioning, memory impairment, and slurred speech. Death can occur after a single use of inhalants or after prolonged use. Sudden sniffing death (SSD) may result within minutes of inhalant abuse from irregular heart rhythm leading to heart failure.

Nitrous oxide is readily available in Arizona. Nitrous oxide can be purchased in canisters (whippets) at head shops (retail outlets that cater to drug users), catering supply stores, and over the Internet. Nitrous oxide also is commonly sold at raves in whippets or inflated balloons. Abusers typically use the gas to inflate a balloon and then breathe in the gas from the balloon. Nitrous oxide-filled balloons typically are sold at raves for \$2 to \$5 each. In response to growing abuse among youth, the Arizona legislature passed a law in April 2001 making it illegal for individuals to knowingly sell, give, or deliver a nitrous oxide container to an individual under the age of 18.

Diverted Pharmaceuticals

Diverted pharmaceuticals pose an increasing threat to Arizona. An estimated 15 percent of drug treatment provided in Phoenix is attributed to the abuse of diverted pharmaceuticals. The Scottsdale Police Department reports that the abuse of pharmaceuticals increases when MDMA availability decreases. Pharmaceuticals are diverted and abused by a variety of individuals ranging from adolescents to older adults. The most commonly diverted pharmaceuticals in Arizona include hydrocodone (Vicodin), benzodiazepine (Valium, Xanax), oxycodone (OxyContin, Percocet, Percodan), diazepam (Valium), steroids, and codeine.

Pharmaceuticals are diverted in a variety of ways in Arizona, including "doctor shopping," pharmacy diversion, prescription forgery, smuggling from Mexico, and purchasing over the Internet, particularly from foreign sources such as Mexico. Doctor shopping is a practice by which individuals who may or may not have a legitimate ailment visit numerous physicians to obtain drugs in excess of what should be prescribed legitimately. A significant portion of the diverted pharmaceuticals available in Arizona are smuggled from Mexico. Forging prescriptions is the primary method by which pharmaceuticals are diverted in Arizona. According to

the DEA Phoenix Division, in 2001 law enforcement officials uncovered an OxyContin prescription fraud group operating in the Phoenix area. The individuals used fraudulent prescriptions and paid for the drugs either with cash or by billing an

insurance company using information obtained from stolen medical records. Officials reported that more than 20 individuals were involved in the organization. Diverted pharmaceuticals sold for \$1 to \$40 per dosage unit in 2002 in Arizona.

Outlook

Arizona will continue to serve as a destination and transshipment point for illicit drugs. Mexican DTOs will remain the greatest threat to the state. These organizations use Arizona to transport and distribute large amounts of methamphetamine, cocaine, heroin, and marijuana destined for markets in Arizona and other areas of the United States.

Methamphetamine, both powdered and crystal, will remain the principal drug threat to Arizona. Crystal methamphetamine will continue to attract new users because of its increasing availability and high purity. Crystal methamphetamine will become more available in smaller cities and rural areas throughout the state and may surpass powdered methamphetamine as the predominant type available in some areas. Mexican DTOs and criminal groups likely will increase the amount of methamphetamine they smuggle into Arizona as demand for the drug grows.

Cocaine will remain a significant drug threat to Arizona although there are some indications that cocaine use may be declining somewhat. Powdered and crack cocaine will remain widely available throughout the state, with crack more available in larger metropolitan areas. Mexican DTOs and criminal groups have historically used the state to transport shipments of cocaine into

and through Arizona to drug markets throughout the country, and there are no indications that this trend will change.

The availability, distribution, and abuse of heroin are not likely to decrease in the near future. Although Mexican black tar heroin will remain the dominant type available in Arizona, the availability of Mexican brown powdered heroin will continue to expand beyond the urban areas to smaller towns. Mexican DTOs will continue to be the primary transporters and distributors of heroin in the state.

Marijuana will remain the most commonly available and widely abused drug in Arizona. Marijuana produced in Mexico will remain the predominant type available. Arizona will continue to serve as a gateway for smuggling marijuana from Mexico into the United States.

The abuse of ODDs such as the club drugs MDMA, GHB and its analogs, ketamine, LSD, PCP, and Rohypnol; inhalants; and diverted pharmaceuticals is likely to increase, particularly among teenagers and young adults. Abuse of club drugs and pharmaceuticals will spread to less populated areas of the state. Mexican DTOs may become involved in the distribution of club drugs if demand increases.

Sources

State and Regional

Bisbee Police Department
Border Anti-Narcotic Network
Chandler Police Department
Cochise County Border Alliance Group Task Force
Cochise County Sheriff's Office
Douglas Police Department
El Mirage Police Department
Flagstaff Police Department
Gila County Sheriff's Office
Gilbert Police Department
Glendale Police Department
Graham County Sheriff's Office
Greenlee County Sheriff's Office
La Paz County Narcotics Task Force
Marana Police Department
Maricopa County Sheriff's Office
Mesa Police Department
Metropolitan Area Narcotics Trafficking Interdiction Squads
Mohave Area General Narcotics Enforcement Team
Mohave County Sheriff's Office
Multi-Agency Surveillance Team
Nogales Police Department

Arizona Drug Threat Assessment

Northern Arizona Street Crimes Task Force

Oro Valley Police Department

Parker Police Department

Peoria Police Department

Phoenix Police Department

Pima County Sheriff's Office

Pinal County Narcotics Task Force

Pinal County Sheriff's Office

Pinetop-Lakeside Police Department

Safford Police Department

San Luis Police Department

Santa Cruz County Metro Task Force

Scottsdale Police Department

Snowflake-Taylor Police Department

South Tucson Police Department

Southwest Border Alliance Group

State of Arizona

Arizona Criminal Justice Commission

Department of Health Services

Division of Behavioral Health

Department of Public Safety

Office of the Attorney General

Surprise Police Department

Tempe Police Department

Tohono O'Odham Police Department

Tucson Police Department

Winslow Police Department

Yavapai County Sheriff's Office

Yuma County Sheriff's Office

Yuma Police Department

National

Executive Office of the President

Office of National Drug Control Policy

Arizona High Intensity Drug Trafficking Area

U.S. Department of Commerce

U.S. Census Bureau

U.S. Department of Health and Human Services

National Institutes of Health

National Institute on Drug Abuse

Community Epidemiology Work Group

Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration

Office of Applied Studies

Drug Abuse Warning Network

National Household Survey on Drug Abuse

Treatment Episode Data Set

U.S. Department of Homeland Security

Directorate of Border and Transportation Security

Bureau of Customs and Border Protection and

Bureau of Immigration and Customs Enforcement

(formerly U.S. Customs Service, U.S. Border Patrol,
and Immigration and Naturalization Service)

Contributing agencies known as

U.S. Border Patrol

Special Coordination Center

Tucson Sector

Yuma Sector

U.S. Customs Service

Air and Marine Interdiction Coordination Center

Arizona Customs Management Center

Arizona HIDTA Financial Task Force

Phoenix Financial Task Force

Southwest Field Intelligence Unit

U.S. Department of Justice

Criminal Division

Organized Crime Drug Enforcement Task Force

Drug Enforcement Administration

Domestic Cannabis Eradication/Suppression Program

Domestic Monitor Program

El Paso Intelligence Center

National Clandestine Laboratory Seizure System

Operation Convoy

Operation Jetway

Operation Pipeline

Federal-Wide Drug Seizure System

Phoenix Division

Federal Bureau of Investigation

National Institute of Justice

Arrestee Drug Abuse Monitoring Program

U.S. Attorney's Office

District of Arizona

U.S. Sentencing Commission



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