

What You Can Do

If you suspect meth activity in your neighborhood, report the problem and ask for help. Call 911 or the non-emergency number for your police department – depending on the severity of the situation. It is best if you give your name and phone number because anonymous tips limit how the police can respond to your complaint.

It also helps if you document the problem meticulously – giving times, dates, descriptions of people and vehicles, and specific activities. This will help the police to build a case.

Work with community groups and neighborhood associations. Don't try to solve the problem by yourself. If you are noticing problems, chances are very good that your neighbors are, too. A combined effort is more likely to have quicker success. Neighborhood associations, METH WATCH, crime prevention associations, religious organizations, community drug prevention coalitions, and business associations are just a few possibilities for partnerships.

If you suspect that there is a meth lab in your area, leave at once and report it. Do not open any containers or touch anything. Handling meth lab chemicals can cause burns to skin or eyes and breathing the fumes can cause severe respiratory damage or death!

For more information, visit www.stopmethinflorida.org.



**What you should
know about
Methamphetamine**

Methamphetamine



Florida Office
of Drug Control

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Methamphetamine

What you should know about meth

Meth – also known as crank, Tina, crystal, ice chalk, quartz, go-fast, and zip – is an illegal stimulant that causes euphoria. It is cheap, highly addictive and can be eaten, smoked, snorted, injected or taken anally.

There is no “typical” meth user – the drug crosses social and economic boundaries from upper class housewives to working class citizens to college students. You can’t always tell who is abusing meth just by looking, but long-term meth abusers may be underweight, exhausted, and have dental and skin problems. They also may be paranoid, agitated and aggressive.

People may try meth for the first time to: lose weight, combat exhaustion, relieve depression, have more energy, study longer or because of peer influence. Users also may be curious about the high. But over time, most meth users continue for only one reason: **They are addicted.**

Some of the adverse reactions to methamphetamine include: addiction, convulsions, heart irregularities, high blood pressure, fear, fatigue, depression, restlessness, tremors, wastingness, skin lesions, impotence, exposure to HIV and sexually transmitted diseases, desire to self-mutilate, insomnia, coma and death.

Meth labs can be anywhere – including your neighborhood

Signs you may be in a meth lab include large quantities of household products such as acetone, alcohol, ammonia, battery acid, bleach, cold or allergy pills containing ephedrine or pseudoephedrine, drain cleaner, Heet gasoline additive, hydrogen peroxide, iodine, lithium batteries, matches, mineral spirits, salt, lighter fluid, hoses, laboratory glassware and pressurized cylinders, to name a few.

Signs of a meth lab that can be noticed from a distance include:

- A strong chemical odor such as ammonia (smells similar to cat urine) or acetone (smells similar to fingernail polish).
- Curtains always drawn or windows blackened-out or covered.
- Renters who pay their landlords in cash.
- Increased activity, especially late at night.
- Frequent visitors, particularly at unusual times.
- Excessive trash, perhaps with empty pill bottles or blister packs.
- A noticeable build-up of cigarette butts outside a residence, or other signs that people may be leaving the building to smoke. This can be a clear sign that smoking inside is dangerous due to the explosive nature of chemical fumes.
- Secretive/protective area surrounding the residence (like video cameras, alarm systems, guard dogs, reinforced doors, electric fencing and “No Trespassing” signs.)
- Exhaust fans in constant use.
- Dead grass from chemical dumping.



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2 1/2 years later

Why should you care?

Children: Children of meth users may suffer neglect, as well as sexual and/or physical abuse. Children can be exposed to physically and emotionally unstable and unsafe environments.

Parents: Parents who are using meth often have their parental rights terminated by the state. They typically experience poverty, homelessness, criminal behavior, isolation and depression. Meth use by a child or teen in the home has devastating emotional, physical and financial consequences for the entire family.

The Environment: Every pound of meth that is manufactured creates five to six pounds of toxic waste. Cooking meth generates deadly gases and creates a highly flammable environment.

Property: Meth labs cause property damage to neighborhoods and a decline in property values. For property owners, meth labs carry civil penalties to the owner, loss of rent and loss of valued tenants.

Identity Theft: Meth users who are up for several hours and are tweaking may look through your trash or other materials for personal financial information to fund the next high.

Employers: Meth-addicted employees have excessive absences, and are more prone to injuries on the job or to cause injuries to co-workers. Meth-addicted employees create higher medical costs for the entire organization.

Taxpayers: On average, the cost to clean-up and decontaminate a meth lab starts at \$3,000, and in 2006 meth lab clean-up and decontamination in Florida cost taxpayers \$991,732.