U.S. Department of Justice
Drug Enforcement Administration

Methamphetamine: 1992-1993 Threat Assessment

Drug Intelligence Report

DEA

Intelligence Division

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Cover photograph: Law enforcement authorities, wearing protective clothing and respirators, clean out hazardous materials from a dump site.

The Attorney General has determined that publication of this periodical is necessary in the transaction of the public business required by law of the Department of Justice.

Drug Enforcement Administration

Methamphetamine: 1992-1993 Threat Assessment

Drug Intelligence Report

This report was prepared by the Domestic Unit of the Strategic Intelligence Section. Comments and requests for copies are welcome and may be directed to the Publications Unit, Intelligence Division, DEA Headquarters at (202) 307-8126.

June 1994

ADMINISTRATOR'S MESSAGE

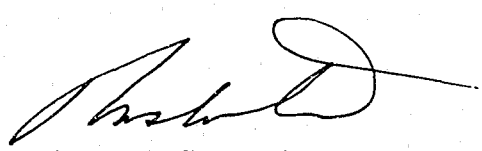
This report presents the Drug Enforcement Administration's (DEA) assessment of the current methamphetamine situation in the United States. It provides an overview of significant methamphetamine availability, price, purity, use, manufacture, and trafficking trends nationwide, as well as a summary of those trends within each DEA Field Division. The report is principally the result of research and analysis of reporting from DEA Field Divisions.

Methamphetamine remains the most prevalent clandestinely manufactured, controlled substance in the United States. Availability is concentrated primarily in the western and southwestern United States where most illicit manufacturing occurs. Although methamphetamine accounts for a relatively small portion of the overall drug problem, it is still a cause for great concern.

An important component of DEA's enforcement strategy is the regulation of precursor and essential chemicals used in the illicit manufacture of methamphetamine. Recently enacted Federal and State legislation aimed at regulating these chemicals illustrates the determination of the United States to combat this problem.

In 1988, the Chemical Diversion and Trafficking Act (CDTA) was passed to provide the Federal Government with a means to regulate chemicals that are being diverted continuously for the illegal production of controlled substances. The U.S. Government continues to take appropriate legal action against firms that act knowingly as suppliers to the illicit drug trade.

Despite these efforts, more stringent chemical control legislation must be enacted to ensure that regulated chemicals are not readily accessible to the illicit market. DEA is committed to this goal and, ultimately, to enforcement efforts to stem the production and distribution of methamphetamine in the United States.



Thomas A. Constantine
Administrator

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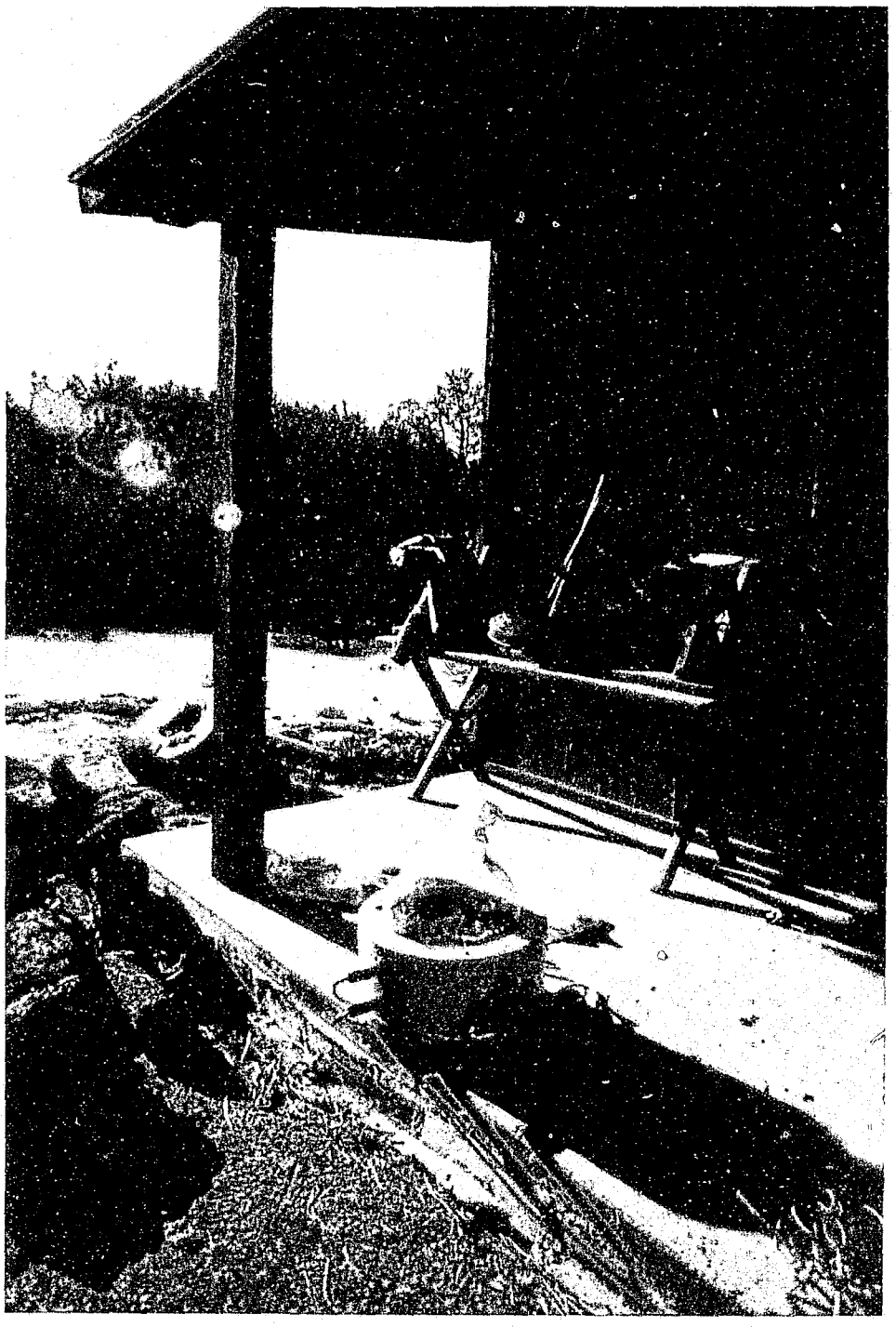


A rural cooking laboratory.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Availability/Price/Purity

Methamphetamine remains the most prevalent, clandestinely manufactured, controlled substance in the United States. Availability is concentrated primarily in the western and southwestern United States where most clandestine manufacture occurs.

The price of methamphetamine at the wholesale and retail levels has increased somewhat at the high end of the price range during the past 4 to 5 years. Currently, methamphetamine prices range from $5,000 to $22,000 per pound, $300 to $2,500 per ounce, and $45 to $200 per gram.

Nationwide purity of methamphetamine at the ounce and gram levels averaged 46 percent and 53 percent, respectively, during 1992, compared to 35 percent and 34 percent, respectively, during 1991. Representative purity levels per 1-pound quantities are not available due to the infrequency of purchases at that level.

Use

The National Household Survey on Drug Abuse for 1991 shows that an estimated 5.2 million Americans (12 years of age and older) have used methamphetamine at least once in their lifetime. (Survey data for prior years and for 1992 are not available.)

Reporting from the Drug Abuse Warning Network (DAWN) shows that the estimated number of metropolitan area methamphetamine-related emergency room episodes decreased at a relatively steady rate from the first half of fiscal year (FY) 1989 through the first half of FY 1992. However, this downward trend reversed itself during the latter half of FY 1992. During the second half of FY 1992, there was a 52-percent increase in the number of emergency room episodes involving methamphetamine.

DAWN emergency room data also indicate that methamphetamine abuse is concentrated in the metropolitan areas of Los Angeles, San Diego, and San Francisco. In Los Angeles and San Diego, methamphetamine-related hospital emergencies increased sharply during the latter half of 1992.

Illicit Manufacture

According to DEA reporting, 288 domestic methamphetamine laboratories were seized during 1992, accounting for 87 percent of all clandestine, dangerous drug laboratory seizures. The 1992 figure represents a 9-percent decrease from the previous year's total of 315 methamphetamine laboratories seized, and continues the downward trend in laboratory seizures involving this stimulant that began in 1990.

During 1992, approximately 83 percent of the methamphetamine laboratory seizures occurred in the Dallas, Denver, Los Angeles, Phoenix, San Diego, San Francisco, and Seattle DEA Field Divisions. This clearly indicates that the manufacture of methamphetamine still is based primarily in the western and southwestern United States.

Chemical Diversion

Chemical control legislation enacted at the Federal and State level has made it increasingly difficult for laboratory operators to obtain needed chemicals. Consequently, trafficking organizations have been forced to seek new sources and develop novel ways to circumvent the law.

"Rogue" chemical companies play a significant role in the illicit methamphetamine problem. While operating in the shadow of legitimacy, these businesses are prime facilitators of illicit methamphetamine production.

Manufacturing and Distribution Organizations

Throughout the United States, numerous individuals, groups, and organizations, from independent entrepreneurs and outlaw motorcycle gangs to Mexican polydrug trafficking organizations (comprised of Mexican nationals and Mexican-Americans), manufacture and distribute methamphetamine. Although Mexican traffickers are late arrivals in the methamphetamine arena, they are capable of using their high-volume production methods and large-scale distribution networks to increase substantially the drug's availability in the United States. For this reason, domestic law enforcement agencies generally consider the Mexican polydrug traffickers' involvement in methamphetamine a significant threat.

METHAMPHETAMINE: AVAILABILITY, PRICE/PURITY, AND USE

AVAILABILITY AND PRICE /PURITY

Methamphetamine remains available in varying quantities in most areas of the United States, although in somewhat limited quantities in most parts of the northeast and Mid-Atlantic regions. Availability is concentrated primarily in the western and southwestern United States where most clandestine laboratory activity occurs. Methamphetamine also is available in limited retail amounts in the Southeast and in somewhat larger quantities in the Midwest.

Availability is concentrated in the western and southwestern United States.

The price of methamphetamine at the wholesale and retail level has increased somewhat at the high end of the price range during the past 4 to 5 years. Currently, methamphetamine prices range from $5,000 to $22,000 per pound, $300 to $2,500 per ounce, and $45 to $200 per gram (figure 1).

Nationwide, purity of methamphetamine at the ounce and gram levels averaged 46 percent and 53 percent, respectively, during 1992, compared to 35 percent and 34 percent, respectively, during 1991. Representative purity levels for 1-pound quantities are not available due to the infrequency of purchases at that level.

USE

The National Household Survey on Drug Abuse for 1991, sponsored by the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, showed that an estimated 5.2 million Americans, 12 years of age and older, have used methamphetamine at least once in their lifetime. (Lifetime prevalence rates for 1985, 1988, and 1990 are not available. The lifetime prevalence rate for 1992 is not yet available. Data concerning past year, past month, weekly, and daily prevalence rates for methamphetamine are also unavailable.)

Reporting from DAWN shows that the estimated number of metropolitan area methamphetamine-related emergency room episodes decreased at a relatively steady rate from the first half of FY 1989 through the first half of FY 1992. This downward trend reversed itself, however, during the latter half of FY 1992. During the second half of FY 1992, there was a 52-percent increase in the number of emergency room episodes involving methamphetamine. Despite this, second-half FY 1992 emergency room episodes remained below those reported in FY 1989.

Figure 1

Methamphetamine Prices

(Dollars)

Quantity	1989	1990	1991	1992	1993 (Jan - Jun)
Pound	5,000 - 18,000	6,000 - 20,000	5,000 - 22,000	5,000 - 22,000	4,000 - 20,000
Ounce	450 - 2,000	500 - 2,400	500 - 2,500	300 - 2,500	400 - 2,600
Gram	50 - 125	50 - 150	50 - 150	45 - 200	45 - 150

Figure 2

Drug Abuse Episodes Involving Methamphetamine*				
Metropolitan Area Emergency Rooms				
Time Period	FY 1989	FY 1990	FY 1991	FY 1992
Oct-Mar (First half)	2,275	1,801	1,427	1,155
Apr-Sep (Second half)	2,006	1,452	1,285	1,750
Total	4,281	3,253	2,712	2,905

* DAWN data from a probability sample of hospital emergency rooms in 21 metropolitan areas.

DAWN emergency room data indicate that methamphetamine abuse is concentrated in the metropolitan areas of Los Angeles, San Diego, and San Francisco. In Los Angeles and San Diego, methamphetamine-related hospital emergencies increased sharply during the latter half of 1992 (figure 2).

Nationally, approximately three-quarters of the patients treated for drug abuse episodes involving methamphetamine during 1992 were white, nearly 65 percent were male, approximately one-fourth were between 18 and 25 years of age, and 40 percent were between the ages of 26 and 34.

Approximately 45 percent of the patients treated in emergency rooms as a result of methamphetamine abuse indicated that they were dependent on the drug. Approximately one-fifth had come to the emergency room because of an overdose, approximately 30 percent as a result of an unexpected reaction to the drug, and more than 20 percent came to emergency rooms due to the chronic effects associated with methamphetamine abuse.

DAWN reporting also indicates that the injection of methamphetamine continues to be the predominant route of administration used by patients admitted to DAWN emergency rooms for methamphetamine-related problems. Despite this, the percentage of patients who indicated that injection was their primary method of administration decreased slightly during the past year from 38.4 percent in FY 1991 to 34.9 percent in FY 1992. Moreover, there has been an increase in the percentage of patients who smoked methamphetamine during the past several years. Those who smoked methamphetamine increased from 3.9 percent during FY 1989 to 6.8 percent during FY 1992.

Figure 3

Routes of Methamphetamine Administration				
DAWN Emergency Room Patients				
(Percent)				
Method	FY 1989	FY 1990	FY 1991	FY 1992
Oral	12.2	10.1	12.4	10
Injected	37.5	38	38.4	34.9
Smoked	3.9	5.7	6	6.8
Snorted	22.6	16.7	16.5	21.9
Unknown	23.8	29.5	26.7	26.4

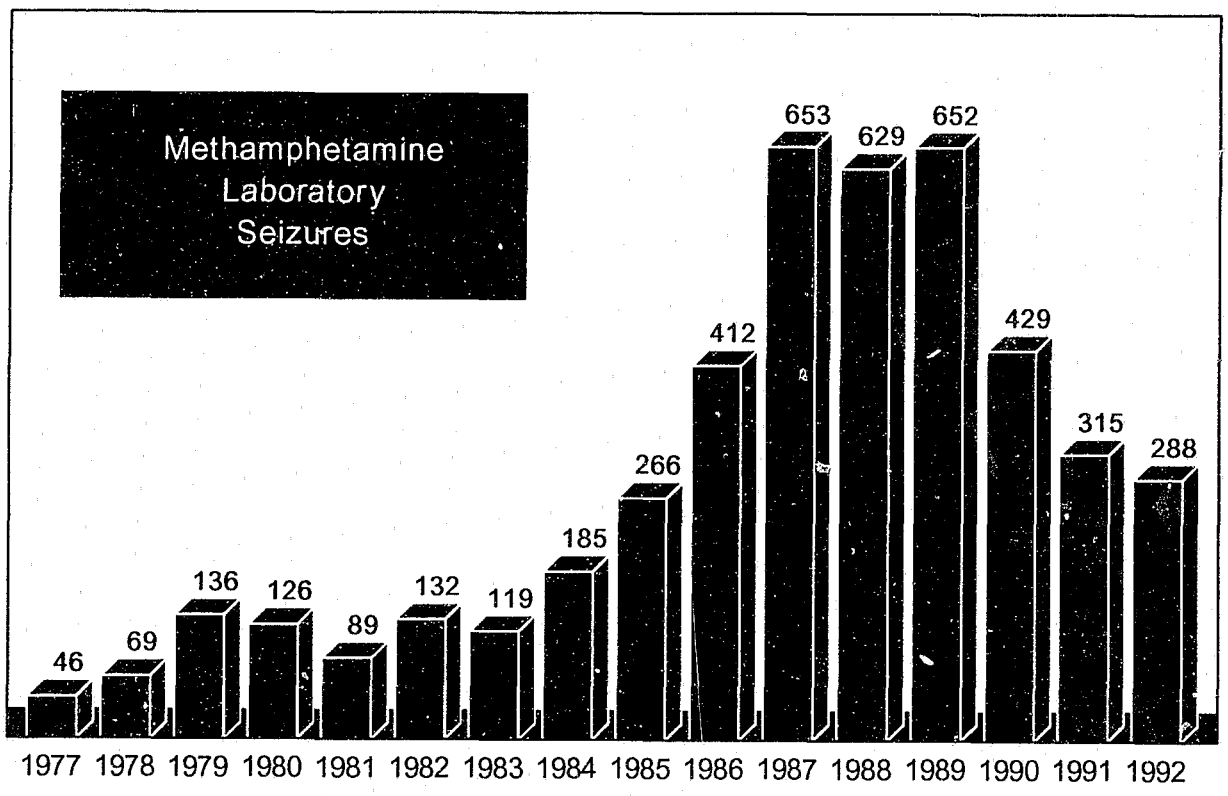
ILLICIT MANUFACTURE

LABORATORY SEIZURES

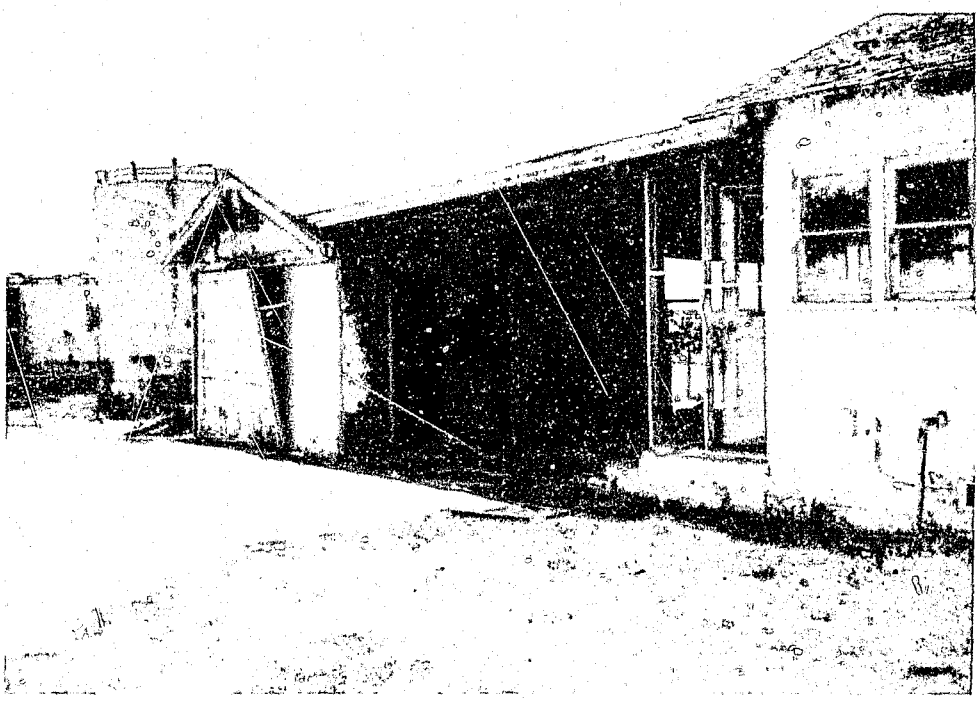
Although clandestine methamphetamine laboratory seizures declined during 1992, it remained the most prevalent, clandestinely manufactured, controlled substance in the United States. Based on DEA reporting, 288 methamphetamine laboratories were seized in 1992, accounting for 87 percent of all clandestine dangerous drug laboratory seizures. The 1992 figure represents a 9-percent decrease from the previous year's total of 315 laboratories seized, and continues the downward trend in laboratory seizures which began in 1990 (figure 4).

The Dallas, Denver, Los Angeles, Phoenix, San Diego, San Francisco, and Seattle Field Divisions accounted for approximately 83 percent of all methamphetamine laboratories seized in 1992. This clearly indicates that the clandestine manufacture of the drug still is based primarily in the western and southwestern United States. Methamphetamine laboratory seizures declined in 14 DEA Field Divisions including the San Francisco Division, which continued to report the highest number of seizures. In 1992, the San Francisco Division seized 67 clandestine methamphetamine laboratories compared to 81 in 1991. However, DEA offices in Dallas, Los Angeles, Phoenix, San Diego, and St. Louis reported an increase in the number of laboratories seized within their respective areas.

Figure 4

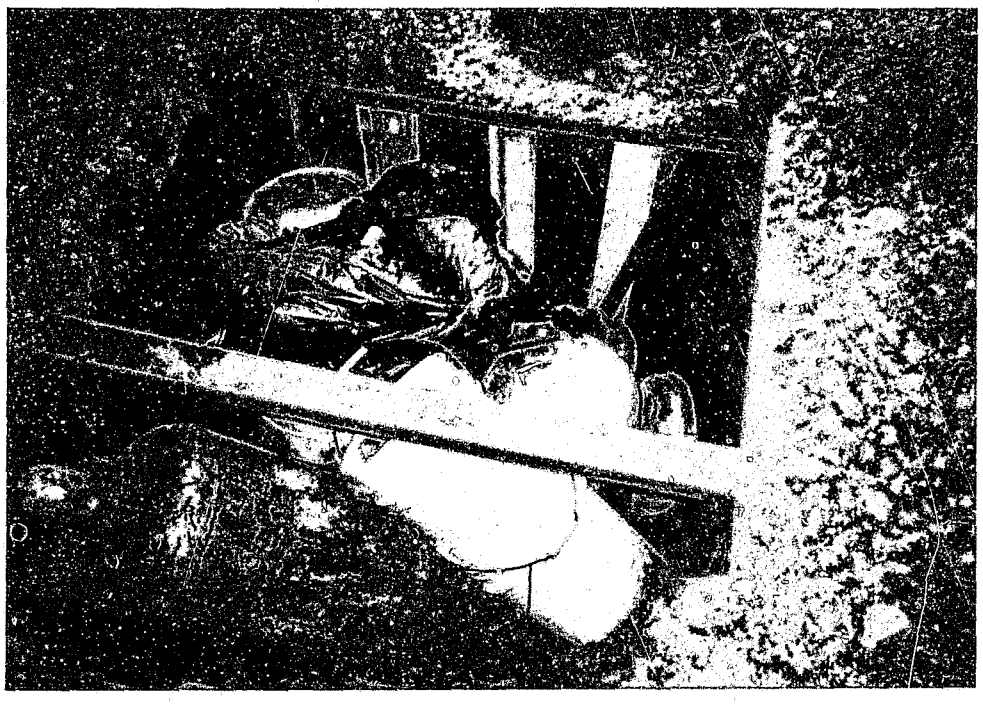


LABORATORY OPERATIONS



Rural site of a clandestine methamphetamine laboratory.

Clandestine laboratories have been seized from every imaginable location; from suburban homes, garages, apartments, mobile trailers, urban dwellings, and industrial areas to specially designed underground vaults. Clandestine laboratories have been abandoned, conveyed, camouflaged, booby-trapped and buried underground. Laboratories usually are constructed in very rural areas across the United States; however, an increasing number of small laboratories are being located in urban and suburban neighborhoods where they pose a significant threat to health and safety. Methamphetamine laboratories are used not only to produce an illegal, often deadly drug, but they have caused explosions, fires, toxic fumes, and irreparable damage to human health and to the environment.



A dismantled laboratory stored underground.

Usually, clandestine laboratories are operated on an irregular basis rather than on a set schedule. Operators often produce a batch of methamphetamine, then disassemble the laboratory and store it or move it to another location while acquiring additional chemicals. Storage facilities often are utilized to stockpile and safeguard chemicals, glassware, and the finished product. An operator often will utilize different locations to manufacture methamphetamine. Therefore, it is not uncommon for an organization to have multiple laboratory sites. Relocating the laboratory affords some protection against detection by law enforcement authorities.

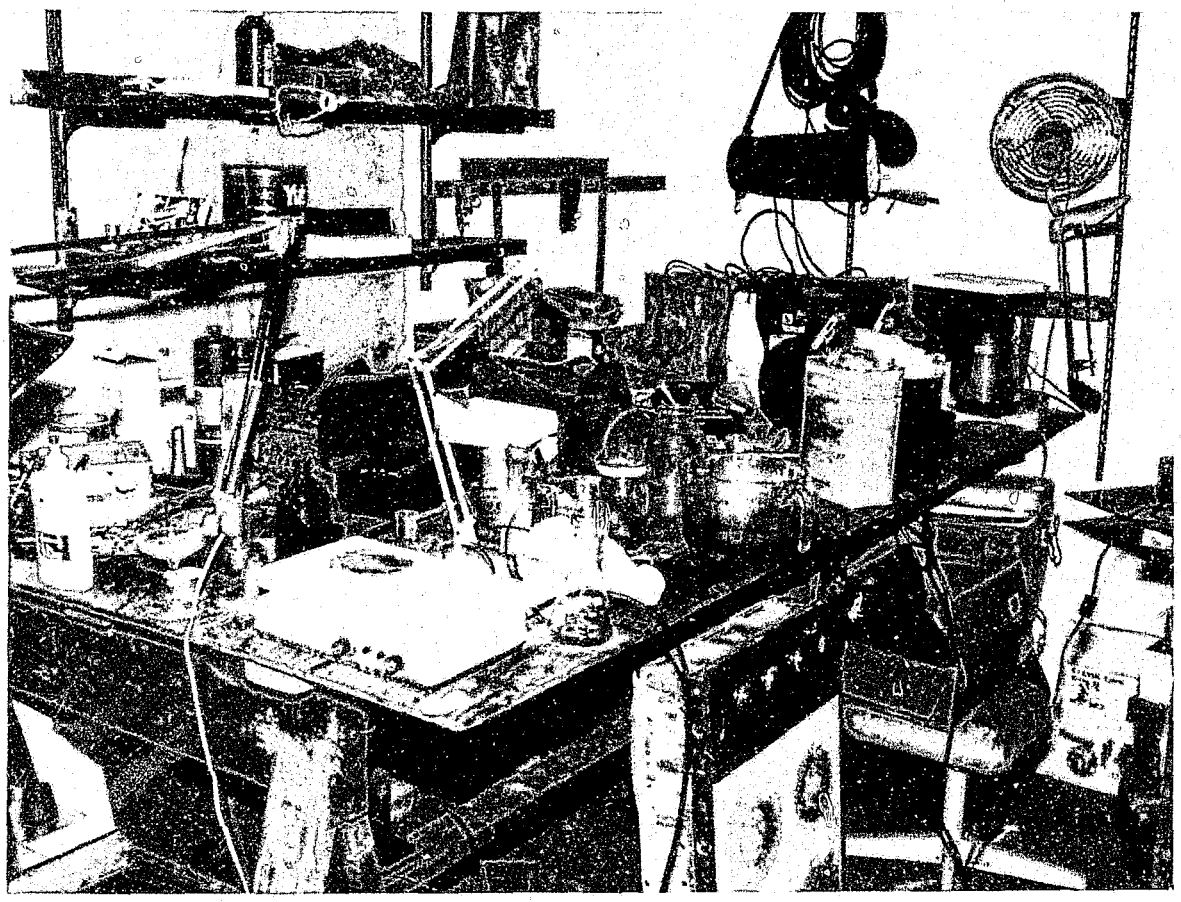
Often, clandestine laboratory operators are well armed, and their laboratories occasionally are booby-trapped as a security precaution. Numerous weapons, including explosives, routinely are confiscated in conjunction with clandestine laboratory seizures. Public safety and environmental concerns are of small importance to illicit drug laboratory operators. Every year, a number of clandestine laboratories have experienced fires or explosions that have led to their discovery. Laboratory operators often accumulate waste chemicals during the synthesis of clandestine drugs. They usually dispose of these and other hazardous chemical wastes by unsafe and illegal methods. Chemical wastes often are dumped on the ground or in nearby streams and lakes, poured into local sewage systems or septic tanks, or buried underground.

They usually dispose of hazardous chemical wastes by unsafe and illegal methods.

Laboratory operators dump contaminated containers, used laboratory equipment, and chemical wastes at their convenience.

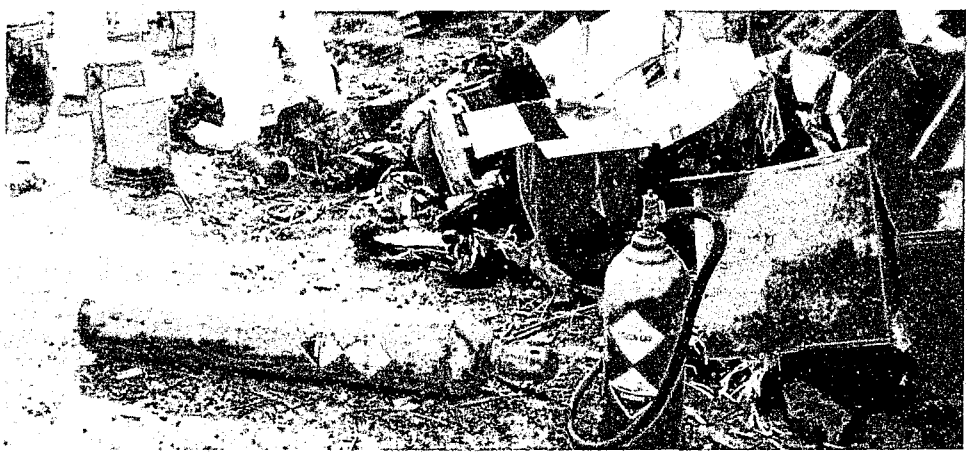
Hazardous waste materials are dumped carelessly by the roadside.

Individuals who synthesize methamphetamine commonly are referred to as "chemists" or "cooks." Their level of education and knowledge of chemistry can vary from high school dropouts with no real chemical knowledge to professional chemists with graduate degrees in chemistry. These individuals typically have very little formal training; rather, they frequently follow a handwritten recipe or have learned to synthesize methamphetamine from underground publications, apprenticeships, or during incarceration. There are, however, a small number of cooks who are fairly adept or knowledgeable with regard to synthesizing methamphetamine. These individuals are able to use chemicals more efficiently, thus increasing the yield ratio of chemicals to finished product. In addition, they have the capacity to solve problems that may occur during the manufacturing process. These individuals provide a contrast to those operators who simply follow a recipe and generally are unqualified to perform corrective measures.



A small laboratory setup in a residential garage. Common domestic items are interspersed with methamphetamine laboratory equipment.

EQUIPMENT SEIZED FROM A FULLY EQUIPPED LABORATORY IN A RURAL LOCATION



Hydrochloride (HCl) gas tanks.

Heating mantles.

Mop buckets used to strain wet methamphetamine.

MANUFACTURING METHODOLOGIES

Although the manufacture of methamphetamine can be accomplished by a variety of chemical synthesis methods, most commonly it is produced using the phenyl-2-propanone (P2P) or ephedrine reduction routes of synthesis. The ephedrine reduction method was used most often in clandestine laboratories located in California, but it has become widespread throughout much of the United States. It is preferred over the P2P method of methamphetamine production for three reasons. First, it is a simpler route of synthesis; second, it produces a more potent form of methamphetamine; and third, ephedrine is available more readily to clandestine laboratory operators in California and the Southwest.

Methamphetamine has two stereoisomers, dextro- (d-) and levo- (l-), and can also exist as a racemic (50:50) mixture (d,l-). The reduction of l-ephedrine yields only the "d-" isomer, while the P2P methods yield the racemic mixture. Since the "d-" isomer accounts for most of the stimulant effects associated with methamphetamine, the ephedrine reduction method produces substantially more active drug than the P2P methods. Use of the ephedrine reduction method has increased considerably over the past several years.

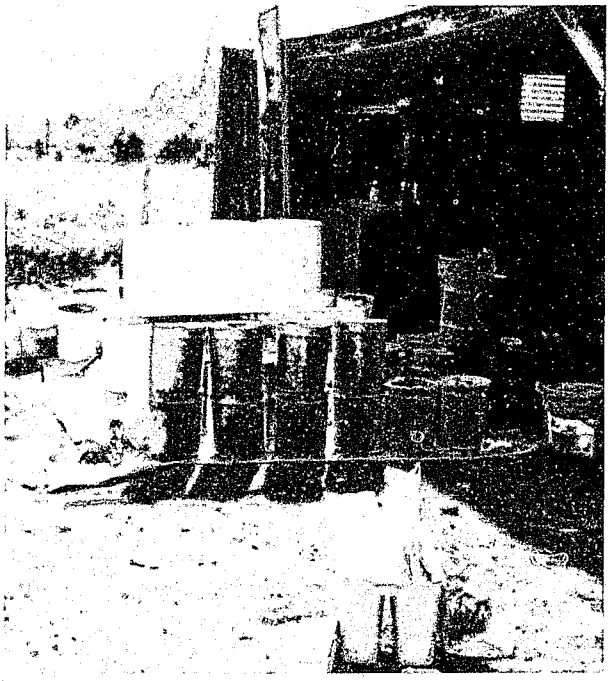
In 1992, 206 of the 288 methamphetamine laboratories seized (approximately 76%) were identified, or suspected of, utilizing the ephedrine reduction method of production. This figure includes laboratories capable of using both the ephedrine and P2P methods. Figure 5 illustrates this shift in production technique encountered at clandestine methamphetamine laboratories.

The ephedrine reduction method was used or suspected in 206 of the 288 methamphetamine laboratories seized in 1992.

A relatively new and simple procedure to synthesize methamphetamine has been reported using a variation of the ephedrine reduction method. The process is being called a "cold cook method" on the streets because an external heat source is not required for the synthesis to proceed. The method uses commonly available material and chemicals to manufacture between 1 and 2 ounces of methamphetamine per batch. The process is performed in such readily available containers as two 32-ounce sports drinking bottles, insulated coffee cups, mugs, or in modified laboratory glassware.

Figure 5

Methamphetamine Route of Synthesis					
Method	**1988**	**1989**	**1990**	**1991**	**1992**
Ephedrine Reduction	59 (10%)	219 (34%)	228 (53%)	178 (57%)	206 (72%)
Phenyl-2-Propanone (P2P)	153 (24%)	197 (30%)	134 (31%)	86 (27%)	55 (19%)
Unknown	417 (66%)	236 (36%)	67 (16%)	51 (16%)	27 (9%)

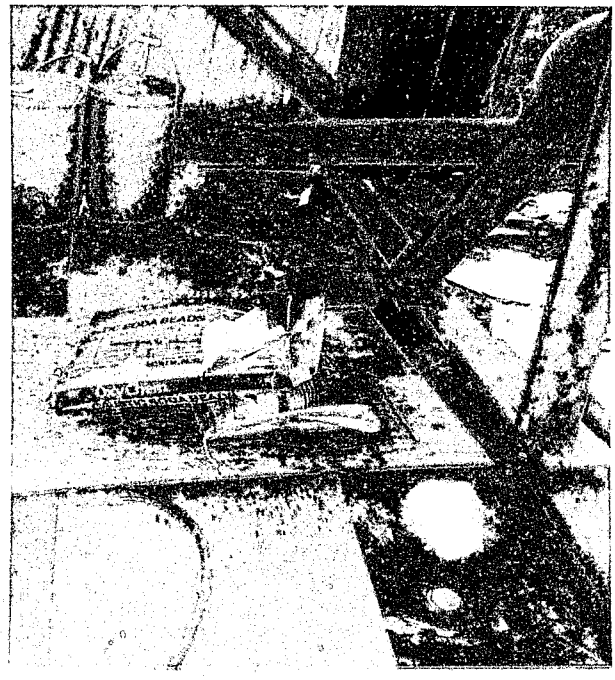


Freon (gray cans).

Red phosphorus.

CHEMICALS UTILIZED
IN THE METHAMPHETAMINE SYNTHESIZING PROCESS

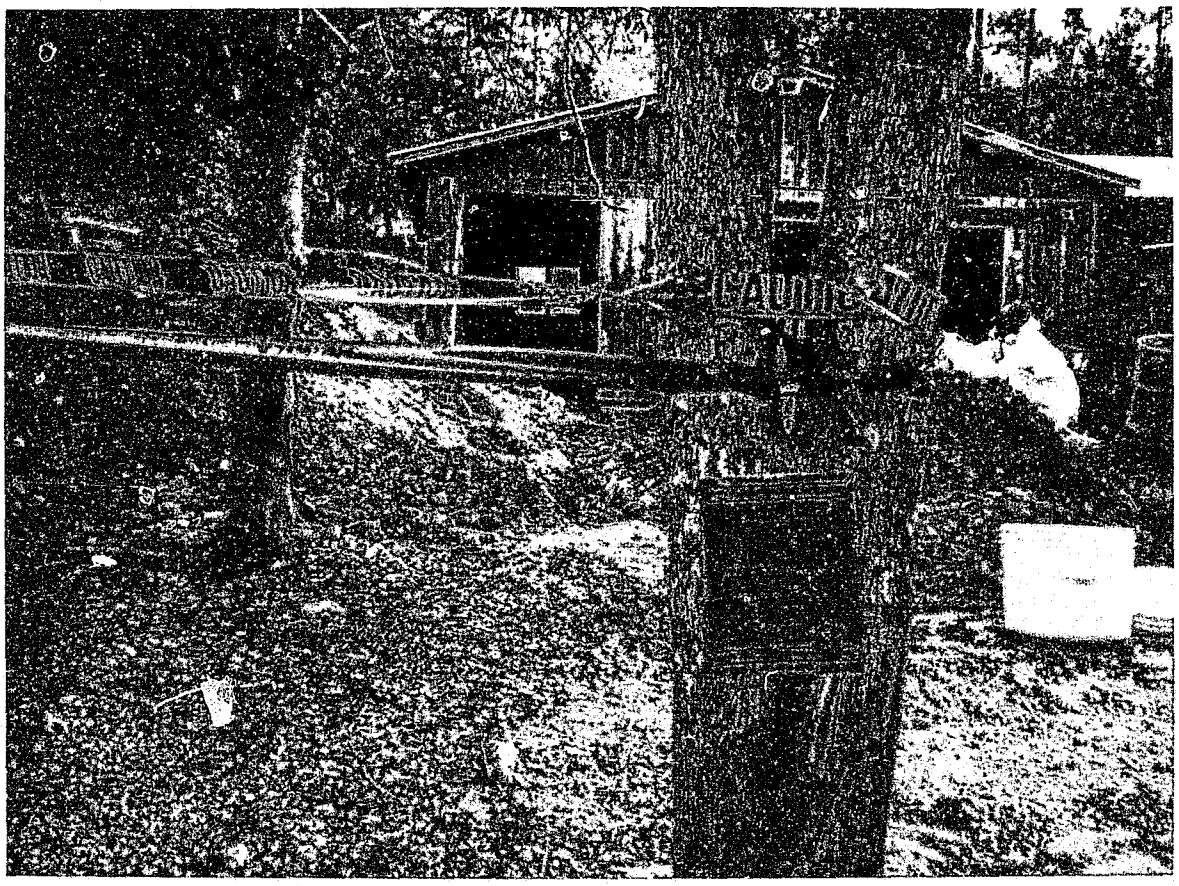
Freon (gray can) and hydriodic acid (blue carboy).



Caustic soda.

P2P is a Schedule II immediate precursor of methamphetamine under the Controlled Substances Act, and is available commercially or can be manufactured clandestinely. Prior to the emergence of the ephedrine reduction method, the use of P2P was the preferred route of synthesis for the production of methamphetamine. Continued use of this method of production is indicated by the three P2P laboratories seized in 1992.

Furthermore, 55 methamphetamine laboratories were seized in 1992, which produced, or were capable of producing, P2P as an intermediate step to the finished product. In all, approximately 27 percent of all the methamphetamine laboratories seized during 1992 involved the use of the P2P route of synthesis.



Law enforcement authorities cordon off methamphetamine laboratory sites because of potential danger to the public.

CHEMICAL DIVERSION

The necessary chemicals and equipment to operate a clandestine laboratory are integral to the manufacture of illicit methamphetamine. Whether the P2P method, ephedrine reduction method, or another method of synthesis is used, various combinations of chemicals, glassware, and equipment are required. Therefore, acquisition of chemicals is a vital and readily identifiable component of the illicit trafficking cycle.

Chemical control legislation enacted at the Federal and State level increasingly has made it difficult for operators to obtain needed chemicals. Consequently, trafficking organizations constantly are seeking new sources and developing novel ways in which to circumvent the law. They manufacture some of their own chemicals, use "runners" to purchase necessary chemicals, and experiment with alternate, non-regulated chemicals. Laboratory operators obtain regulated chemicals, such as ephedrine, by purchasing over-the-counter products which are exempt from the provisions of the CDTA of 1988. (See appendix for further information on the CDTA.) Chemicals also are acquired from "rogue" chemical companies or in States that have less restrictive chemical laws or in such countries as Canada and Mexico.

EPHEDRINE TABLET "LOOPHOLE" IN THE CDTA

Sales, distribution, imports, and exports of ephedrine, a precursor for the illicit manufacture of methamphetamine, currently are regulated under the CDTA in quantities at or above the designated threshold amount, which is currently 1 kilogram. Suspicious orders must be reported and records of transactions must be maintained for 4 years. However, the CDTA also contains certain exceptions and exclusions. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) approved drug products containing listed chemicals are exempt from the regulatory provisions of the CDTA. Twenty-five-milligram (25-mg) ephedrine hydrochloride (HCl) tablets, an approved FDA dosage-form drug, currently are exempt from the recordkeeping and reporting requirements of the CDTA.

Consequently, illicit manufacturers have been able to purchase large quantities of the tablets from which ephedrine can be extracted easily and used to produce methamphetamine. This provision is referred to as the "Ephedrine Loophole." In contrast to Federal regulation, legislation at the State level has precluded over-the-counter sales of ephedrine tablets in some areas while mandating their classification as controlled substances in others. However, many States do not regulate the sale of ephedrine tablets.

Millions of ephedrine tablets, diverted through this loophole in the law, have been found at clandestine laboratory sites throughout the United States. Furthermore, an increasing number of ephedrine conversion/extraction laboratories have been seized during 1992. Laboratory operators grind the tablets in food processors then dissolve them in liquid (water or denatured alcohol) to extract the ephedrine from the binder that holds the tablets together. To extract 1 kilogram of ephedrine, approximately 48,000 tablets are required.

It requires 48,000 tablets to extract 1 kilogram of ephedrine.

The conversion ratio of ephedrine to methamphetamine ranges from 50 to 70 percent of the weight of the ephedrine. Unfortunately, operators are able to purchase unlimited quantities of ephedrine tablets in many areas throughout the country. Thus, the ephedrine tablet exemption makes it relatively easy for traffickers to purchase a regulated chemical legally that otherwise would be difficult to obtain. Usually, this is done through mail order distributors or on a will-call basis.

Retailers establish an artificial limit on the quantity of tablets they will sell to a particular customer during each transaction.

RETAIL DISTRIBUTION OF EPHEDRINE TABLETS

Retail distributors of tableted ephedrine target and rely heavily upon private consumers to purchase their products. Often, the tablets are advertised in national magazines and sold in 100- and 1,000-count bottles. Discounts are offered with the purchase of large quantities. Retailers sell ephedrine tablets with the knowledge or reasonable cause to believe that the tablets will be utilized to manufacture a controlled substance illegally. However, they disclaim any knowledge of unlawful conduct. Some retailers operate exclusively as a mail order business and do not permit transactions to occur on the premises. This insulates the retailers from direct knowledge of illegal activity, which makes it difficult to prove culpability. In contrast, walk-in customers can purchase ephedrine tablets and other stimulant drugs from retail stores or outlets that market their products in local newspapers.

Retailers commonly establish an artificial limit on the quantity of tablets they will sell to a particular customer during each transaction. This so-called "ceiling" is not imposed by law; rather, it reflects the quantity the company perceives can be sold without arousing the suspicion of drug enforcement authorities. However, retailers often will sell unlimited quantities of ephedrine tablets to anyone with a business license regardless of their enterprise. Subsequently, traffickers obtain business licenses to legitimize their transactions with various chemical companies. Operators also utilize numerous names and addresses to circumvent the restrictions instituted by the distributor.

In several cases, retailers have become involved directly in supplying traffickers with ephedrine tablets after learning that the tablets would be used to manufacture methamphetamine. In fact, some companies will sell their clients methamphetamine recipes, laboratory setups, in addition to telling them which chemicals can be substituted for others, and how to establish fake addresses and conceal profits. A case in Salt Lake City illustrates the extent to which some companies conspire to facilitate illicit drug trafficking activity. During a 15-month investigation, four undercover agents purchased ephedrine HCl tablets from three defendants after informing them the tablets would be used to produce methamphetamine. The company owners/operators removed the tablets from their original containers and transferred them to Ziploc bags during the transactions. Agents purchased a total of 2.7 million tablets during the operation. At the conclusion of the investigation, in October 1992, an additional 2 million 25-mg ephedrine HCl and ephedrine sulfate tablets were seized from the distributing company and the owner's residence.

OTHER MEANS OF CIRCUMVENTING THE CDTA

In addition to taking advantage of existing loopholes, traffickers are able to acquire regulated chemicals through a variety of other means. Many chemicals are purchased at "rogue" chemical companies that offer over-the-counter sales to walk-in customers of all types, usually at inflated prices. Rogue companies knowingly participate in the diversion of chemicals by furnishing regulated chemicals to traffickers, even if the customer has no legitimate use for the product. Most of their proceeds are derived from drug trafficking organizations. These companies most often follow the letter rather than the intent of the law, doing only what is required and nothing more. They often disregard behavior or practices indicative of illicit intent; thus, suspicious orders often go unreported.

Companies are required under the CDTA to demand or check a driver's license and one other form of identification for a transaction that meets or exceeds the threshold or cumulative threshold established by regulation. Companies are not required by law to ask the purchaser how the chemicals will be utilized. Although some rogue companies will request the information to protect themselves from culpability, most make it a point not to do so. Violators know that these companies provide chemicals on a "no questions asked" basis. If the information is requested, many customers, when purchasing quantities of chemicals, give purposes, which are incompatible with legitimate use, or which are inconsistent in view of cheaper substitute products. Nevertheless, sale of the requested item will be approved. In addition, companies may refuse to sell a combination of chemicals, such as hydriodic acid and red phosphorous, during one transaction, because this may show knowledge and intent. Rather, they may sell one chemical and request that this item be taken out of the building. The company will then allow the customer to return in order to purchase additional chemicals.

Companies may refuse to sell a combination of chemicals, such as hydriodic acid and red phosphorous, during one transaction.

Traffickers are taking advantage of such business practices described above by employing an assortment of schemes to procure large quantities of regulated chemicals. In California, for example, Mexican drug trafficking organizations, including chemical brokers, were employing runners to make purchases of hydriodic acid from three rogue chemical companies operating in the Oakland area. It is estimated that these three chemical firms supplied in excess of 90 percent of the hydriodic acid utilized in clandestine laboratories within the State of California. Approximately 80 percent of the hydriodic acid originated from one company.

Individuals possessing the proper identification required by law were recruited to make chemical purchases routinely or on a onetime basis. Records obtained from one chemical company revealed cases in which multiple people were using the same address and conducting repeat visits. There were also a number of individuals making numerous purchases for which a different license plate number was recorded for each transaction. However, the chemical company did not consider these transactions to be suspicious and, therefore, did not notify the proper authorities. Additionally, numerous individuals, in the vicinity of the chemical company, were approached by unknown Hispanic males and offered $50 to purchase chemicals. Money orders were supplied to the individuals, each of whom would proceed to purchase a 5-gallon container of hydriodic acid and subsequently deliver the chemicals to vehicles waiting nearby. The chemicals were transported to storage facilities or stash houses in residential areas where they remained until needed to manufacture methamphetamine. Storage facilities may serve as clearing houses for several different manufacturing organizations.

STATE INITIATIVES TO CONTROL HYDRIODIC ACID

As of January 1, 1993, the State of California included hydriodic acid as a precursor under the California Health and Safety Code. The classification requires any manufacturer, wholesaler, retailer, or other person who sells, transfers, or otherwise furnishes hydriodic acid to obtain a license to do so from the State. The law further requires that a report of any proposed sale, transfer, or other furnishing be submitted to the California Department of Justice 21 days prior to the transaction. Any manufacturer, wholesaler, retailer, or other person who obtains hydriodic acid from a source outside the State, is required to report the transaction 21 days in advance of receiving the chemical.

A container of hydriodic acid.

The stringent controls placed on hydriodic acid have resulted in a shortage of the chemical in California. This had a significant impact on Mexican methamphetamine trafficking organizations, which were forced to seek alternative sources of hydriodic acid— chemical companies operating in the State of Nevada.

California law, requiring the licensing of hydriodic acid-handlers, prompted the president of a California-based chemical company to set up operations in Sparks, Nevada, in order to continue his lucrative business and to circumvent California law. The company opened for business on March 26, 1993. Investigation revealed that by March 29, 1993, the company had sold 800 pounds of hydriodic acid. A subsequent 2-day surveillance of the company, in April 1993, led to the arrests of seven suspects and the seizure of 32 gallons of hydriodic acid.

In three days, the company had sold 800 pounds of hydriodic acid.

During the surveillance, all customers patronizing the business were Hispanic, and the only chemical purchased was hydriodic acid. Chemical purchasers would travel from California to Nevada, purchase hydriodic acid, and then return to California. In some instances, Nevada residents were paid to purchase hydriodic acid and transport it to a predesignated area where it would be transferred to another vehicle. The hydriodic acid was transported to California for eventual use in a clandestine laboratory. A few of these individuals were arrested in California after crossing the State border for possessing hydriodic acid without a permit. The majority of these purchasers were identified as Mexicans from the San Jose area.

IMPACT OF CHEMICAL CONTROL LEGISLATION

Chemical control legislation, aimed at preventing easy access to hydriodic acid, has led to a serious shortage of the chemical in California. The price of hydriodic acid has increased by as much as 500 percent since January 1, 1993. Currently, hydriodic acid sells for $1,000 to $3,500 per gallon. Prior to January 1, a 5-gallon container could be purchased for approximately $2,400. In numerous reverse operations conducted by DEA, undercover agents have negotiated the sale of multigallon quantities of hydriodic acid in exchange for cash, methamphetamine, or a combination of the two.

Additionally, Mexican traffickers are purchasing hydriodic acid from neighboring States and Canada, as well as manufacturing the chemical in the United States and, possibly, Mexico. Chemical supply companies in the Oakland, California, area have seen a dramatic increase in sales of iodine crystals, a chemical used in the manufacture of hydriodic acid. Interviews conducted at one chemical company disclosed receipts of over $132,000 for iodine sales for the month of July alone.

On August 4, 1993, a sophisticated laboratory utilized to manufacture hydriodic acid was seized at a residence in Salinas, California. Located in the garage were numerous chemicals, glassware, and apparatus, including ten 22-liter triple-neck flasks (four broken), 300 pounds of red phosphorous, 500 pounds of iodine crystals, five 2000-milliliter (ml) filter flasks (factory sealed), five 22-liter heating mantels (factory sealed), numerous scales, electric fans, water pumps, and fifty 5-gallon water bottles in various tubing. Located in two connecting sheds in the rear of the property were twelve 22-liter triple neck flasks (nine in production, three filled with liquid), numerous heating mantels, rubber tubing, and power cords. Located behind the shed were 50 buckets, 13 of which were filled with iodine crystal sludge.

Follow-up search warrants conducted at two storage lockers in San Jose led to the seizure of 6,400 pounds of iodine crystals and 15 gallons of hydriodic acid. Also seized were five 22-liter setups including glassware, condensers, and heating mantels. The 6,400 pounds of iodine crystals potentially could produce 800 gallons of hydriodic acid.

EPHEDRINE SMUGGLING FROM MEXICO

In addition to the diversion techniques discussed previously, operators are turning increasingly to sources in other countries, such as Canada and, in particular, Mexico, as a means to circumvent chemical restrictions in the United States. Neither Canada nor Mexico currently restrict the purchase of many chemicals that are regulated in the United States. Consequently, traffickers currently are smuggling chemicals into the United States for the illicit production of methamphetamine.

The restricted sale of ephedrine in the United States has created a black market for that key compound. Numerous Mexican organizations, acutely aware of the profitability involved, have begun to focus their efforts toward smuggling and brokering ephedrine. Nowhere is this trend more evident than along the Southern California–Mexico border. Ephedrine is accessible to Mexican traffickers since it currently is shipped, without restriction, from Germany to Mexico and subsequently smuggled across the United States–Mexico border in privately owned vehicles.

Ephedrine is accessible to Mexican traffickers.

According to the U.S. Customs Service (USCS), 1,970.3 pounds of ephedrine were seized during FY 1992; 18 seizures occurred at ports of entry along the California–Mexico border. Most seizures occurred at the San Ysidro Port of Entry. In 8 of the 18 seizures, the violator and the registered owner of the seized vehicle were from the same city; of the eight, six were from the same exact address. Eight of the seized vehicles were registered to owners with addresses spanning from Tijuana to Fallbrook, California. Ten others were registered to owners in Los Angeles, Orange, San Bernardino, San Diego, Santa Cruz, and Ventura Counties. Nine of the violators were from the Los Angeles–Fresno area, seven were from the Tijuana–San Diego area, and two returned to Mexico without being identified.

Most ephedrine seizures occurred at the San Ysidro Port of Entry.

Large quantities of ephedrine also have been seized in Mexico. This not only indicates that Mexicans are involved in the large-scale importation of ephedrine into the United States, but also that their efforts are organized. In September of 1992, a joint investigation conducted by the Mexican Federal Judicial Police and DEA Office in Guadalajara resulted in the seizure of 2,651 kilograms of ephedrine from a residence in Tuxpan, Jalisco. Reportedly, the ephedrine was purchased from a legitimate source in Germany and shipped to Veracruz, Mexico. It was transported to Tuxpan by way of tractor-trailer in the original containers. In Tuxpan, the ephedrine was repackaged into sugar and fertilizer bags. The repackaged precursor, which weighed over 100 pounds per bag, was to be placed on a tractor-trailer with food merchandise and transported to Tijuana, Mexico. At that location, it was to be transported through the port of entry in smaller quantities in various passenger-type vehicles. The ephedrine was to be distributed in the California cities of Chino, Chula Vista, Fresno, Los Angeles, Riverside, and Sacramento. The defendant arrested in the case admitted that over the past year at least 10 metric tons of ephedrine were smuggled from Mexico into the United States using this method.

Plastic bags containing ephedrine and red phosphorus.

MANUFACTURING & DISTRIBUTION ORGANIZATIONS

Although California is a primary source area for methamphetamine, other areas in the United States also serve as sources of supply. The manner in which manufacturing operations are carried out often makes it difficult to determine the location of the source of supply. Operators manufacturing in a particular area may distribute the finished product to associates residing locally, in neighboring States, or other geographic areas. In addition, some California-based traffickers are moving their operations to other parts of the country where law enforcement resources are limited. The finished product may be transported back to California or may be distributed in the area where the manufacturing occurred. Privately owned vehicles are the modes of transportation used most frequently in the nationwide distribution of methamphetamine. Other methods of transportation include commercial tractor-trailers and commercial airlines as well as the U.S. mail and United Parcel Service (UPS) systems.

Methamphetamine manufacturing and distribution operations vary greatly in size, structure, and degree of sophistication. Some laboratory operators act as their own chemists, while others hire chemists to run the laboratories for them. Many manufacturers are independent producers who cook for various organized groups. This is particularly true of larger organizations that may hire or contract chemists to manufacture methamphetamine in return for cash, finished product, or a combination of the two. Other cooks manufacture for themselves rather than for a particular organization.

Independent entrepreneurs represent the largest identifiable group involved in methamphetamine-related investigations.

Leasing storage facilities, procuring chemicals, securing the laboratory site, and setting up glassware and equipment may be the responsibility of one person or many different individuals. Several individuals may simply work together to combine their expertise, chemicals, etc., on an ad hoc basis. The number of individuals that comprise an operation, and the function each performs differs from one organization to the next. Illicit manufacturers often develop and maintain associations with other laboratory operators. In certain areas, they function as a loosely interconnected community or network, sharing, selling, or exchanging chemicals, recipes, glassware, or the finished product.

Numerous individuals, groups, and organizations from independent entrepreneurs and outlaw motorcycle gangs to Hispanic polydrug trafficking organizations currently manufacture and distribute methamphetamine. Nationally, independent entrepreneurs represent the largest identifiable group involved in methamphetamine-related investigations. To a lesser degree, outlaw motorcycle gangs continue to play a role in the distribution aspect and influence production in certain areas. They most typically insulate themselves by financing manufacturing operations rather than becoming directly involved.

MEXICAN TRAFFICKING ORGANIZATIONS

The most noteworthy trend of recent years is taking place in California where Mexican traffickers dominate the large-scale production and distribution of methamphetamine in the Fresno, San Bernardino, San Diego, and Riverside areas. In the Monterey, Sacramento, and San Jose areas, Mexican involvement in methamphetamine trafficking appears to be increasing. The most significant aspect which distinguishes Mexican organizations from traditional traffickers is the high volume of methamphetamine they produce.

Numerous 22-liter setups are used frequently in laboratories operated by Mexican traffickers to produce an average of 20 to 80 pounds during each manufacturing process. Furthermore, these organizations may operate 3 to 8 laboratories simultaneously. Illegal aliens are encountered most frequently at the laboratory site. In some cases, they are hired as helpers or to maintain the reaction process, while the actual chemist visits periodically to ensure the operation is functioning properly. In others, they are responsible for all facets of the manufacturing process. Many laboratories are operated by low-level organizational members who usually are uninformed about the overall laboratory operation.

Typically, laboratories operated by Mexican traffickers are set up in remote areas throughout southern and parts of northern California. Organizations may purchase property or pay for the short-term use of a site, in order to acquire a secure location to manufacture. In the Fresno area, for example, laboratories usually are constructed on property rented out by farm laborers who are paid up to $10,000 for use of the property. Cooking most frequently occurs during the weekend when the farms are not in operation. An organization may utilize one location many times. The same location may be used by numerous organizations. Some individuals make money simply by renting out laboratory sites to various organizations.

An individual, acting in a supervisory capacity, may be responsible for the overall management of the laboratory, such as ensuring that the necessary chemicals and equipment are present and are set up for the operation to proceed. Generally, chemicals are stored in stash houses and brought to the laboratory site on a limited basis. The amount of chemicals present at the laboratory usually is restricted to that amount required to complete a particular cook. Once the process is complete, the laboratories are dismantled, and the equipment is put into storage.

Chemicals are procured for these laboratories from sources in the United States and Mexico. Purchasers with Hispanic names account for the majority of chemicals, glassware, and other laboratory apparatus sold in California. Frequently runners are recruited to make chemical purchases at rogue chemical companies. Mexican predominance in methamphetamine production also is evidenced by the smuggling of ephedrine across the United States–Mexico border in privately owned vehicles.

The amount of chemicals present at the laboratory usually is restricted to the amount required to complete a particular cook.

A degree of cooperation exists among many of these organizations because links between them already were established through their long-standing cocaine, heroin, and marijuana connections. They now have expanded their portfolio to include methamphetamine. Organizations assist each other in obtaining chemicals, glassware, and the finished product. Chemists may manufacture for numerous organizations. Chemical brokers supply numerous manufacturing organizations with chemicals.

Mexican traffickers have replaced numerous "mom-and-pop"-type operations. Also, they rapidly may be replacing other traditional wholesale suppliers of methamphetamine. Mexican traffickers virtually have saturated the market with high-purity methamphetamine. Since they operate on a large scale, Mexican traffickers are able to sell at a reduced rate. Thus, many groups that traditionally manufactured methamphetamine are finding it more cost effective to purchase it from Mexican sources. This enables many groups to purchase methamphetamine at a "fair" price while avoiding the risks associated with production.

Some organizations travel by vehicle to California and transport methamphetamine back to their respective areas. Mexican traffickers may be, or increasingly may become, the primary source of supply for many of these groups operating throughout the country. Also, there is limited evidence to suggest that Mexican organizations may be attempting to expand their operations to other areas of the country. Methamphetamine seizures involving Hispanic males, all of whom were residents of California or operating a vehicle with California license plates, have been reported in the following cases.

- On March 23, 1993, members of the DEA Las Vegas Resident Office Highway Interdiction Team seized 10 pounds of methamphetamine from two Mexican males in a 1980 red Chevrolet Monte Carlo bearing California license plates. The driver of the vehicle was a resident of Pomona, California. The passenger was a resident of Tamazula, State of Durango, Mexico. The two were en route to Las Vegas from Rialto, California. The drug was concealed in two false compartments located in the right and left rear interior quarter panels of the vehicle. The false compartments opened following the discovery and activation of an electronic switch/knob located on the floorboard near the driver's kick panel. Seven of the packages were wrapped in yellow plastic cellophane, while three other packages were wrapped in a clear plastic cellophane wrap. The owner of the vehicle was not present.

- On March 6, 1993, the Missouri Highway Patrol seized 2 kilograms of methamphetamine, 23 kilograms of marijuana and 227 grams of cocaine on Interstate 44 (I-44) eastbound near Lebanon, Missouri, in Laclede County. The drugs were seized from a 1986 Nissan pickup truck bearing California license plates. The occupants of the vehicle, one Latin male and one white female, were residents of El Monte, California. The drugs were concealed in a false compartment located between the original bed and the false bed of the pickup truck.

- On March 15, 1993, as part of an investigation of a major cocaine and methamphetamine distribution network in the area of southern Idaho, the DEA Boise Resident Office arrested one Mexican male after he delivered approximately 12.5 pounds of methamphetamine to a DEA undercover agent. Subsequent to the arrest, three Mexican coconspirators were arrested, two of whom reside in San Jose, California, and have been identified as the sources of supply.

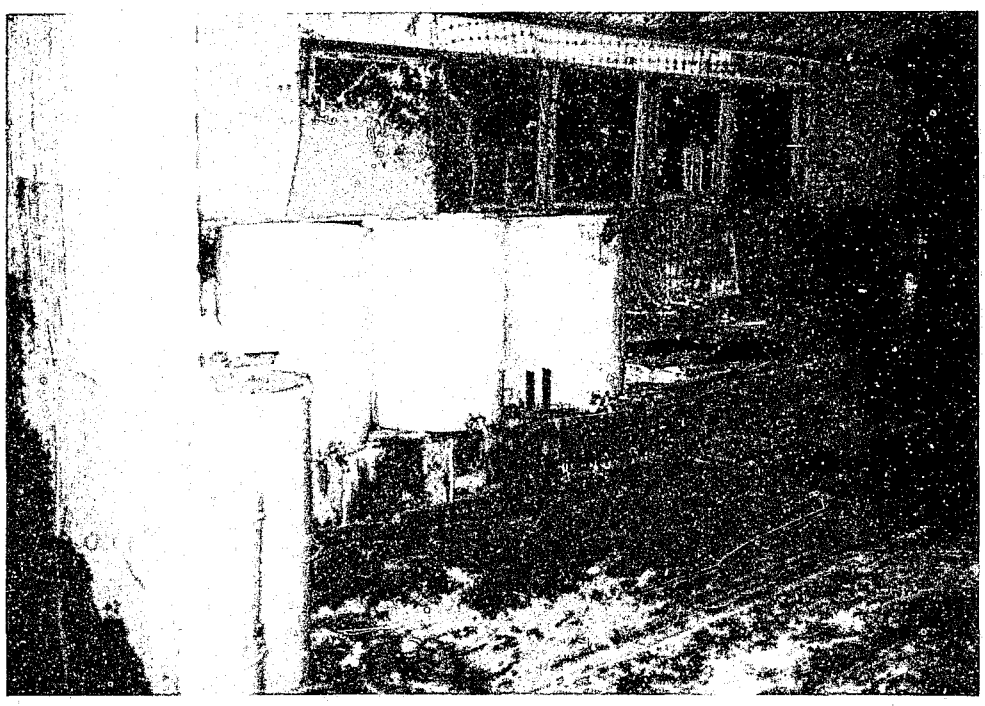
- On January 11, 1993, the Oregon State Police reported the seizure of 2.3 kilograms of methamphetamine from a garment bag located in the trunk of a Lincoln Town Car bearing California license plates. The packages were wrapped in a shopping bag. After the packages were discovered, one arrestee told the trooper it was a corn meal mixture for making tamales. The methamphetamine was being transported to Woodburn, Oregon, from Brea, California. The seizure occurred on I-5 northbound in Douglas County. The arrestees were three Hispanic males, all residents of California.

- On November 26, 1992, the Iowa State Highway Patrol reported the seizure of 20 pounds of methamphetamine. The methamphetamine was concealed inside electrically controlled compartments located in the side panels of a 1987 Ford Thunderbird (displaying California license plates), and was being transported to Rockford, Illinois, from California. The seizure occurred on eastbound I-80 in Scott County, Iowa. Access to the compartments was gained by inserting a pin or needle into a small hole in the dashboard just left of the steering column while the ignition was on. Once contact was made between the pin and the metal switch, the panels opened. Pins were found on the back side of the sun visors. The arrestees were two Mexican males, both residents of California. Post-arrest statements given by one of the defendants indicate that he received the methamphetamine from an unknown subject in Sacramento, California. The name of the intended recipient was not known.

Interior of a large-scale Mexican-operated methamphetamine operation located in California. Additional photographs taken at this site are shown on the next three pages.

EQUIPMENT SEIZED IN A LARGE-SCALE MEXICAN METHAMPHETAMINE LABORATORY IN CALIFORNIA

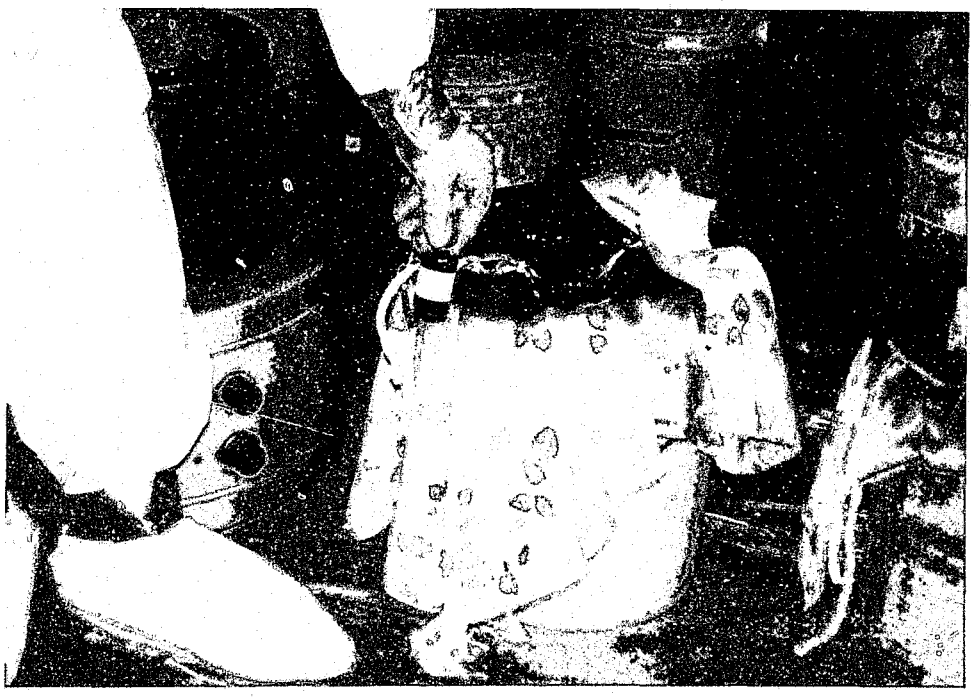
Law enforcement authorities assess the extent of the operation.



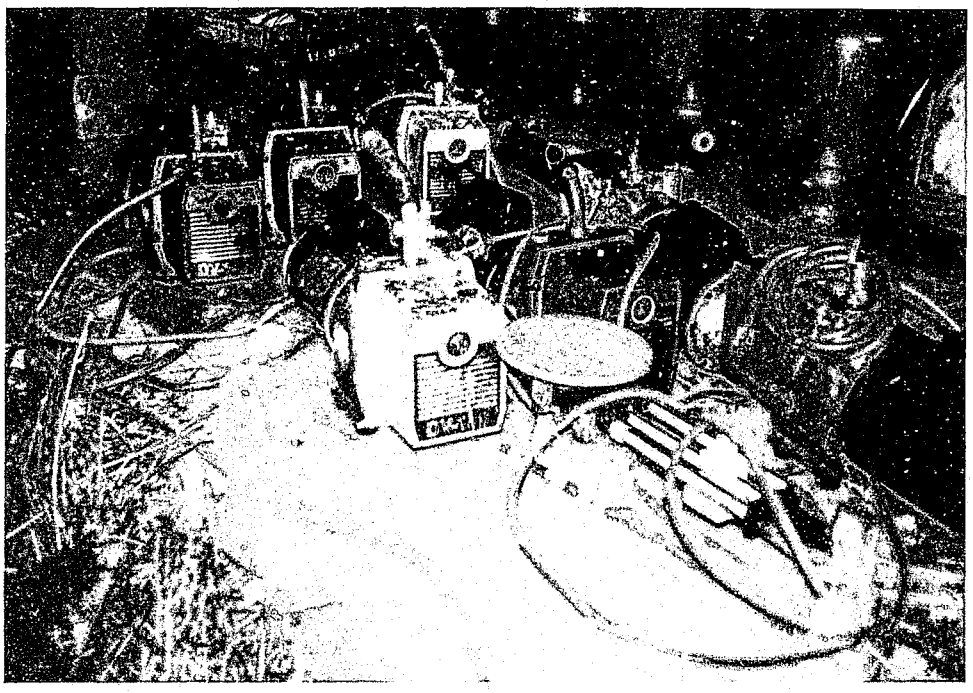
Large separatory barrels.

Heating mantles and reaction flasks.

Condensers. These are not enountered at many Mexican-operated laboratories.



Gravity filter setup. Note bedsheet used as filter.



Vacuum pumps and scale.

DEA FIELD DIVISION ASSESSMENTS

ATLANTA FIELD DIVISION

Area of Responsibility

The Atlanta Field Division is responsible for DEA Resident Offices (RO's) located in Georgia, North Carolina, South Carolina, and Tennessee.

Summary

Methamphetamine is available in most areas of the Division. Specifically, it is available in small retail quantities (grams to multigrams) in Charlotte, North Carolina; throughout South Carolina; and in the Knoxville, Tennessee, area. Wholesale quantities (multiounces to pounds) are available in Greenville, South Carolina, and northern Georgia.

Prices

Methamphetamine sells for $12,500 per pound and $700 an ounce.

Abuse

The National Institute on Drug Abuse (NIDA)-sponsored Community Epidemiology Work Group (CEWG) (see appendix) reports that amphetamines[1] were detected in about 10 percent of the urine samples tested at Atlanta's Grady Memorial Hospital emergency clinics from mid-1989 through 1990. The proportion of these drugs detected in urine decreased to 7 to 8 percent in 1991 and the first 6 months of 1992. Amphetamine emergency room episodes reported to DAWN are inconsistent, but suggest a low level of use. The most recent DAWN data contain no reports of amphetamine use. Amphetamine is not reported as a primary drug of choice at the public treatment facilities in metropolitan Atlanta.

Availability and Trafficking

The Atlanta Division Office (DO) reports that methamphetamine is available in ounce and smaller quantities in north Georgia and the Atlanta area. Laboratories operate on a small-scale level generally yielding between 1 to 5 pounds per cook. Ephedrine reduction is the predominant method of synthesis. Precursor chemicals are supplied by major chemical corporations on the East Coast or smaller companies in the southeast with subsidiary connections to large chemical companies. Ephedrine powder is shipped via UPS or Federal Express from California.

The Charlotte RO reports that methamphetamine is available in small retail quantities. Small-scale laboratories are believed to be operating in the area. The manufacture and subsequent distribution of methamphetamine is carried out by independent traffickers, and is not controlled by any one organized group. No significant or organized biker activity is reported.

According to the Greenville, South Carolina, Post of Duty (POD), methamphetamine is available in pound and ounce quantities and is reported to be manufactured in the area for local consumption. "Kitchen sink" (small-scale) operations are encountered most frequently in outlying areas, with operators having loose connections to bikers and truckers. Truck drivers utilize area truck and rest stops in order to distribute small quantities of methamphetamine to other truckers.

[1] Amphetamine statistical data sometimes include methamphetamine emergency room episodes.

According to the Columbia, South Carolina RO, methamphetamine is not as available as in previous years. Presently, it is available in 0.1- or 0.2-gram quantities. Ephedrine hydrochloride currently is sold on the street as methamphetamine. Laboratories are concentrated most heavily in the northwestern portion of the State where outlaw motorcycle gangs are headquartered. However, most traffickers are independent entrepreneurs who generally belong to the fringes of society: they are poor, usually without steady employment, are fascinated with firearms, and do not hesitate to use violence against competitors or law enforcement officers. Methamphetamine traffickers also employ booby traps to protect laboratory sites.

According to the Nashville RO, methamphetamine is available in small retail quantities and distributed at area truckstops.

BOSTON FIELD DIVISION

Area of Responsibility

The Boston Field Division is responsible for DEA RO's in Connecticut, Maine, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, Rhode Island, and Vermont.

Summary

Limited reporting indicates methamphetamine is generally unavailable in New England. When encountered, it is found almost exclusively among outlaw motorcycle gangs or biker types.

Price

Price data is not available due to the infrequency of purchases.

Abuse

According to CEWG, all sources indicate that stimulant use has remained relatively low in the Boston area. Methamphetamine emergency room episodes typically number fewer than 10 per year. Only about 1 percent of all admissions to public drug treatment facilities between FY 1988 and FY 1992 had used amphetamines in the preceding month.

Availability and Trafficking

According to the Concord RO, incidents involving methamphetamine are isolated to outlaw motorcycle gangs and their associates. For the most part, these groups deal exclusively among themselves. Small quantities of the drug are distributed in a few area bars primarily in southern New Hampshire. An outlaw motorcycle gang in Lowell, Massachusetts, may be the source of supply to other motorcycle gang members in the area.

CHICAGO FIELD DIVISION

Area of Responsibility
The Chicago Field Division is responsible for RO's located in Illinois, Indiana, Minnesota, North Dakota, and Wisconsin.

Summary
Methamphetamine is available most frequently in limited retail amounts except in Indianapolis where wholesale quantities are available.

Prices
Prices for methamphetamine range from $15,000 to $18,000 per pound, $1,000 to $2,000 per ounce, and $100 to $125 per gram.

Abuse
CEWG reports that Chicago has not experienced any significant outbreak of methamphetamine abuse within the metropolitan area. Emergency room episodes have been relatively stable or declining for most stimulant abuse (excluding cocaine). Methamphetamine emergency room episodes numbered fewer than 10 per quarter between 1990 and first quarter 1992, except for 14 episodes in the third quarter of 1990.

Availability and Trafficking
The Fargo, North Dakota, RO reports methamphetamine is available for $1,400 to $2,000 per ounce. Production occurs primarily in northwest or west-central North Dakota. Bismarck is the predominant distribution area distribution within the State. Fargo is supplied by sources residing in Bismarck and Minneapolis–St. Paul, Minnesota.

The Indianapolis RO reports methamphetamine is prevalent in southern Indiana from Terre Haute through Evansville. Prices range from approximately $15,000 to $18,000 per pound and $1,200 to $1,500 per ounce. It is manufactured locally by independent traffickers and transported to the area from California. Sources of supply vary depending upon contacts residing in various areas throughout the United States.

The Minneapolis RO reports methamphetamine is more available in rural farm communities, and generally is not encountered in the metropolitan area. Prices range from $1,000 to $1,500 per ounce and $100 to $125 per gram.

DALLAS FIELD DIVISION

Area of Responsibility

The Dallas Field Division is responsible for RO's located in Alpine, Amarillo, Fort Worth, Lubbock, Midland, and Tyler, Texas, as well as the State of Oklahoma.

Summary

The Division reports a decline in the number of methamphetamine-related cases. Availability and quality have decreased while prices have increased slightly over 1989 figures. Clandestine laboratory seizures have revealed organized and sophisticated operations capable of producing large quantities of methamphetamine. Laboratories are no longer one-man operations; rather, they have become large-scale setups that sometimes operate on a multistate level. Most clandestine laboratories are located in remote areas.

Prices

Prices range from $10,000 to $20,000 per pound and $800 to $1,400 an ounce.

Abuse

CEWG reports that in Dallas methamphetamine and amphetamine emergency room episodes have decreased over the past few years, averaging 53 per quarter in 1990, 39 per quarter in 1991, and 29 for the first quarter of 1992.

Availability and Trafficking

While clandestine laboratories historically were associated with outlaw motorcycle gangs, this trend has changed during the past several years. Of particular significance are emerging independent producers who have little or no affiliation with outlaw biker groups.

The Ft. Worth RO reports methamphetamine is readily available at prices ranging from $16,000 to $20,000 per pound, and $1,400 an ounce. Oklahoma is a source for a portion of the methamphetamine encountered in the Ft. Worth area. Texas cooks operate laboratories in Oklahoma and transport the finished product to Texas. Although P2P is the predominant method of synthesis, laboratory-related seizures by State and local law enforcement agencies indicate that the ephedrine-red phosphorous production method is being utilized in the Ft. Worth area. Laboratories seized within close proximity to the Dallas–Ft. Worth Metroplex are, for the most part, rudimentary with relatively low production capabilities.

Reporting indicates the Dallas–Ft. Worth Metroplex is a source area for methamphetamine in Lubbock. Street prices have remained constant with grams selling for $75 to $100. Ounce prices are in the $800 to $1,200 range.

The Oklahoma City RO reports that much of the methamphetamine distributed within the area is obtained from sources in California. The resurgence of methamphetamine trafficking in Oklahoma is largely a result of ephedrine-based methamphetamine imported from California. Violent crime, aggravated assault, and murder have been directly related to methamphetamine trafficking in Oklahoma. Local laboratory operators compete with California suppliers for a share of the methamphetamine market. A portion of what is manufactured in Oklahoma is transported to other areas of the country for distribution. Independent traffickers are the predominant violators involved in methamphetamine-related investigations. Outlaw motorcycle gangs are active in the area as well.

Tulsa, Oklahoma, is predominantly a consumer area for methamphetamine with points of illicit manufacturing occurring within the area. Ounce prices range from $1,000 to $1,500. Frequently, clandestine laboratory activity is carried out by family members who dominate every aspect of the organization from manufacturing to distribution.

DENVER FIELD DIVISION

Area of Responsibility

The Denver Field Division is responsible for DEA RO's located in Colorado, New Mexico, Utah, and Wyoming.

Summary

Wholesale quantities of methamphetamine are available in most areas within the Division. Traffickers from other geographic areas establish laboratories throughout the Division. An increasing number of independent entrepreneurs are involved in methamphetamine trafficking.

Prices

Methamphetamine prices range from $10,000 to $20,000 per pound, $900 to $1,800 an ounce, and $90 to $125 per gram.

Abuse

CEWG reports that total methamphetamine emergency room episodes decreased 35 percent from 117 in 1989, to 76 in 1990. From the first quarter 1989, to the first quarter of 1991, quarterly episodes for methamphetamine diminished fairly steadily despite some peaks and valleys.

Availability and Trafficking

The Denver Field Division reports methamphetamine is readily available with prices ranging from $10,000 to $20,000 per pound, $1,200 to $1,800 an ounce, and $80 to $125 per gram. Many methamphetamine laboratories encountered in Colorado are capable of producing multipound quantities on a weekly basis. On occasion, major traffickers from other geographic areas of the United States establish laboratories in Colorado. Methamphetamine manufactured in Colorado appears to be distributed locally as well as transported out of State for distribution. Laboratories based in California and Texas also supply quantities of methamphetamine to the area. Outlaw motorcycle gangs play a significant role in the distribution of methamphetamine.

Availability has declined in the Albuquerque area, although the price has remained relatively constant at $1,200 per ounce. Following precursor legislation enacted by the State, clandestine laboratory activity decreased significantly.

The Salt Lake City RO reports that the drug continues to be an expanding problem in Utah. Methamphetamine is available in ounce and gram quantities. Ounce prices range from $900 to $1,200, with gram prices of $90 to $120. Most laboratory seizures occur in the residential areas of north central Utah, from Ogden to Provo. Illicit manufacturers utilize a variety of methods to produce P2P and, ultimately, methamphetamine. Currently, ephedrine tablets are being utilized in an increasing number of laboratories.

Utah chemical supply companies are suspected of selling precursor chemicals to customers in at least 32 States. Intelligence sources and recently seized evidence indicate continued use of legitimately manufactured ephedrine tablets for clandestinely manufactured methamphetamine. Tablets containing 25 milligrams of ephedrine are currently available in 100- and 1,000-count bottles from various retailers and wholesalers. The purchase of tablets avoids the chemical precursor reporting requirements of powder-form L-Ephedrine.

Many laboratories are financed by outlaw motorcycle gangs and subsequently operated by their associates. Nevertheless, an increasing number of independent entrepreneurs are involved in methamphetamine trafficking as opposed to nontraditional organized crime groups. Cooks from California and the Pacific Northwest manufacture in Utah and distribute the finished product in their respective areas. In addition to local production, California has been identified as a source area for methamphetamine in Utah, which is one of many sources of supply for Colorado, Idaho, and Oregon.

Methamphetamine is available most readily in ounce and gram quantities in Wyoming. Reporting indicates that the majority of methamphetamine is supplied by out-of-State sources, specifically from Colorado, Montana, and Utah. Methamphetamine prices range from $650 to $1,000 per ounce and $75 to $100 for gram quantities. Clandestine laboratories are operated by various individuals manufacturing up to 1-pound quantities of methamphetamine on a weekly basis. Investigations and related intelligence indicate that most of what is manufactured clandestinely in Wyoming appears to be distributed primarily in California and Colorado.

DETROIT FIELD DIVISION

Area of Responsibility
The Detroit Field Division is responsible for DEA RO's located in Kentucky, Michigan, and Ohio.

Summary
Methamphetamine is encountered infrequently and does not pose a serious problem. Furthermore, there does not appear to be any significant organized trafficking of methamphetamine, and availability is limited to retail quantities throughout most of the Division. Louisville is the only RO to report the presence of methamphetamine in ounce and pound quantities.

Prices
Methamphetamine prices range from $15,000 per pound, $1,100 to $1,500 an ounce, and $60 to $100 per gram.

Abuse
According to CEWG, some reports of methamphetamine use continue, but overall usage continues to be scattered and infrequent.

Availability and Trafficking
The Cleveland and Columbus (Ohio), Detroit and Saginaw (Michigan) offices report that methamphetamine availability is limited to small retail quantities.

The Louisville RO reports methamphetamine is readily available with pound quantities wholesaling for approximately $15,000. Most laboratory activity occurs in the western portion of the State.

HOUSTON FIELD DIVISION

Area of Responsibility

The Houston Field Division is responsible for DEA DO's and RO's located in Austin, Beaumont, Brownsville, Corpus Christi, Eagle Pass, Galveston, Laredo, McAllen, and San Antonio, Texas.

Summary

Methamphetamine is available in some areas of the Division and is most popular in rural areas among lower- and middle-income groups.

Prices

Methamphetamine prices range from $10,000 to $12,000 per pound, $1,000 to $1,400 per ounce, and $80 to $100 per gram.

Abuse

CEWG reports that methamphetamine emergency room mentions have diminished over the past few years, averaging 86 episodes per quarter in 1989, 40 per quarter in 1990, and 29 per quarter in the first three quarters of 1991.

The fourth greatest illicit drug problem for adult drug treatment clients, amphetamines account for 4 percent of non-alcohol-related admissions in the first quarter of 1992. The average adult client admitted for a primary amphetamine problem is 31 years of age and has been using for 10 years before first entering treatment. About 93 percent are white, and 54 percent are referred from the criminal justice system. Approximately 75 percent use needles, but there is a shift from injecting to inhaling "crystal."

Availability and Trafficking

Most methamphetamine distributed in Houston is manufactured in rural areas. Laboratory activity has diminished as fewer and smaller laboratories are encountered. Some laboratory operations in the area are financed by an outlaw motorcycle club. In addition to laboratories operated by members and affiliates, this club also frequently contracts laboratory operations to independent operators with no affiliation to the club.

The Beaumont RO reports most clandestine manufacturing operations occur in the residential or rural areas of Liberty County situated between Beaumont and Houston. Demand is most prevalent in Jefferson and Orange Counties among the lower- and middle-income groups. Most traffickers are independent entrepreneurs with a history of criminal activity. Some methamphetamine originates from sources in Houston and occasionally Dallas.

The Brownsville RO reports methamphetamine is available in small retail quantities and originates from sources in Austin, Dallas–Ft. Worth, Houston, and San Antonio.

The Corpus Christi RO reports methamphetamine is available in small retail quantities. Among outlaw motorcycle gang members, methamphetamine is readily available; distribution is limited to members and associates of the group.

The San Antonio DO reports methamphetamine frequently is abused by teenagers and young adults in the suburbs and small towns. Increasingly, Hispanics are becoming involved in the distribution of methamphetamine. Anglo-American and Mexican-American violators distribute ounce and gram quantities, with purity levels ranging from 35 to 65 percent.

The Waco RO reports methamphetamine is a popular drug in the areas of Belton, Killeen, Temple, and Waco. Clandestine laboratories operating in the Waco area produce multipound quantities and often operate on a regular basis at the same location. Although most methamphetamine is produced locally, Dallas–Ft. Worth and Houston supply methamphetamine to the area. Operators are independent entrepreneurs with previous criminal records and/or manufacturing experience. Investigations reveal that most manufacturing organizations are comprised of family members. Manufacturers usually transact exclusively with a wholesaler and do not distribute at the retail level.

LOS ANGELES FIELD DIVISION

Area of Responsibility

The Los Angeles Field Division is responsible for DEA RO's located in Riverside, Santa Ana, and Santa Barbara, California, in addition to Nevada, Hawaii, and Guam.

Summary

Methamphetamine is readily available throughout most areas of the Division. Methamphetamine trafficking constitutes a significant problem within the Division, particularly in Riverside and San Bernardino Counties where Mexican traffickers dominate the large-scale manufacture and distribution of methamphetamine.

Prices

Methamphetamine prices range from $5,600 to $12,000 per pound and $800 to $1,200 per ounce.

Abuse

CEWG reports that amphetamine emergency room episodes remain low and steady at around 1.6 percent of all drug episodes. Admissions to public drug treatment facilities for this drug have also remained historically low; however, in the second quarter of 1992, they rose to 2.3 percent of all admissions. Slightly over half of those who list amphetamines as their primary drug when entering treatment are female; 88 percent are white, 9 percent are Hispanic, and 2 percent are African-American.

Amphetamine use by male arrestees according to the Drug Use Forecasting System (DUF) (see appendix) declined from 7 percent in the third quarter of 1991 to 4 percent in the fourth quarter, and has remained at that level through the third quarter of 1992; use among female arrestees shows a more erratic pattern than that for males.

In 1991, amphetamines or methamphetamines were listed by 4 percent of all help-line callers in Los Angeles as a primary drug. This figure had increased to 6.5 percent through September 1992.

Availability and Trafficking

According to the Los Angeles RO, outlaw motorcycle gangs control a large segment of the methamphetamine market in Los Angeles. These gangs often insulate themselves by financing laboratory operations rather than becoming directly involved in actual production. Customarily, free-lance cookers will manufacture for these gangs. In addition to hiring free-lance cookers, one gang also has obtained methamphetamine from another gang, which may have acquired it from Mexican sources. The latter purchased methamphetamine from Mexican traffickers or utilized them to manufacture methamphetamine.

The Santa Barbara RO reports methamphetamine production and distribution continues to be a problem within the Central Coast Tri-County area, particularly the northern portions. Mexican involvement in methamphetamine production and distribution, together with their long-standing cocaine, heroin, and marijuana connections, makes them the most dominant drug trafficking groups within the Central Coast.

The Riverside RO reports that Mexican nationals dominate the large-scale production and distribution of methamphetamine. Many of these Mexican trafficking organizations are polydrug smugglers and have utilized their expertise to expand their operations to include the production of methamphetamine. This trend was first evidenced during the seizure of a number of clandestine laboratories that were being operated and protected by armed Mexican nationals and illegal aliens. Mexican involvement quickly escalated to actual methamphetamine production. Mexican nationals often are paid $200 to $300 to travel to northern California to obtain essential chemicals and glassware. Other groups are recruited to perform such functions as the transfer of chemicals and glassware to storage lockers, to secure locations to manufacture, or to perform the actual cooking. Each group has a different function and generally is insulated from the higher ranking members of the trafficking organization.

Most laboratories are operated in the desert areas of San Bernardino and Riverside Counties and are capable of producing significant amounts of methamphetamine. Prices as low as $5,000 to $6,500 per pound are being offered by Mexican traffickers. Reporting indicates that methamphetamine is being manufactured clandestinely in Mexico due to the accessibility of precursor chemicals, particularly ephedrine.

The Reno RO reports methamphetamine is one of the most sought-after drugs of abuse in northern Nevada. Prices range from $10,000 to $12,000 per pound and $800 to $1,200 per ounce. Most methamphetamine is manufactured clandestinely in the rural areas of northern Nevada and the California–Nevada border area of the Sierra Nevada Mountain Range; however, most laboratory seizures occur in residential areas because they are often easier to detect. Laboratories which operate in residential areas pose a serious threat to the population as well as the environment, as manufacturing by-products are disposed of illegally. Sacramento, California, is a source area for some of the methamphetamine consumed within the Reno area.

Methamphetamine also is transported out of the area for distribution in surrounding States. Traffickers are predominantly independents who are not biker-affiliated.

The Las Vegas RO reports methamphetamine is readily available for $10,000 to $12,000 per pound and $900 to $1,000 per ounce. Most methamphetamine is transported from southern California by vehicle or passenger on commercial airlines. Mexican traffickers are beginning to transport methamphetamine from California and establish distribution networks in the area. Independent entrepreneurs and outlaw motorcycle gangs are involved equally in methamphetamine trafficking.

MIAMI FIELD DIVISION

Area of Responsibility

The Miami Field Division is responsible for DEA DO's and RO's throughout Florida, and Country Offices located in The Bahamas, Barbados, the Dominican Republic, Haiti, and Jamaica.

Summary

Methamphetamine is available in varying quantities within the Miami Field Division. Generally, trafficking is limited to the central and northern sections of the State, where most clandestine laboratory activity occurs. Although most methamphetamine is manufactured locally, it is transported also from laboratories in California and Texas. Despite chemical regulation, traffickers continue to purchase essential chemicals from Florida and out-of-State chemical companies. Furthermore, some chemical firms in Florida supply essential chemicals to illicit laboratory operators in Texas and other States.

Prices

Methamphetamine prices range from $10,000 to 12,000 per pound and average roughly $2,000 per ounce.

Abuse

CEWG reports that there were no methamphetamine emergency room episodes in the Miami Field Division in 1990, 1991, or during the first quarter of 1992.

Availability and Trafficking

The Florida Statewide Epidemiology Workgroup reports that clandestine laboratories producing synthetic stimulants appear more active in northern and central Florida. Approximately 90 percent of the methamphetamine produced in the State is believed to be manufactured in or near Polk County, centered between Orlando and Tampa. A July 1990 Florida Department of Community Affairs survey of local law enforcement agencies revealed that methamphetamine is available in 50 of the State's 67 counties. Clandestine laboratories were reported to be operating in 42 counties.

According to the Tampa RO, methamphetamine represents a substantial abuse problem in Polk County, Florida. Investigations reveal that quantities of methamphetamine are acquired from sources in California. Traffickers travel to California or utilize the mail system as a means for transport to the area. However, most methamphetamine consumed within Polk County is manufactured locally by both resident and out-of-State operators.

Resident operators, normally produce between 1 to 5 pounds per cook using the P2P method. Illicit manufacturers are associated closely with other operators, often sharing or selling chemicals in exchange for glassware, other chemicals, or a portion of the finished product. Manufacture and distribution are carried out by independent trafficking groups consisting primarily of family members. California laboratory operators, considered more sophisticated and capable of producing larger quantities of methamphetamine, are paid to manufacture and instruct in the area.

The Gainesville RO reports methamphetamine is produced in nearby rural areas and that only a small percentage of this is consumed locally. Most of the local methamphetamine is distributed to areas to the north and to the south of Gainesville.

In the Orlando area, methamphetamine is available in ounce quantities but most commonly is sold in gram amounts. Refined methamphetamine is comparable in price to cocaine; however, lesser quality most frequently is encountered. Biker groups operating in the area often are directed by associates from California regarding the manufacturing refinement process.

According to the Panama RO, Louisiana and Texas are source areas for approximately 50 percent of the methamphetamine encountered within the area. Traffickers often travel to other States to purchase methamphetamine for distribution in their particular area. Although methamphetamine is sent through the mail, primarily it is transported by automobile.

The Ft. Myers RO reports that the drug is available in ounce and gram quantities. Prices range from $900 to $1,200 per ounce and $100 per gram. Outlaw motorcycle gangs are the groups most involved in methamphetamine trafficking in the Ft. Myers area. There are independent manufacturers as well.

NEWARK FIELD DIVISION

Area of Responsibility

The Newark Field Division is responsible for RO's located in Atlantic City and Camden, New Jersey.

Summary

Wholesale quantities of methamphetamine are available in several areas within the Division. Philadelphia is a source area for methamphetamine that is trafficked within the Camden RO.

Prices

Methamphetamine prices range from $6,500 to $11,000 per pound and $800 to $1,000 an ounce.

Abuse

CEWG reports that amphetamines have made a slight resurgence in the middle and southern portions of the State although these stimulants are not part of the street drug scene.

Availability and Trafficking

Methamphetamine is readily available in pound and ounce quantities particularly in southern New Jersey. Methamphetamine is sold for $10,000 per pound and $800 to $1,000 an ounce. The average purity encountered by the Camden RO is 40 to 50 percent per dosage unit. Throughout the State, however, purities range from 5 to 75 percent. The majority of methamphetamine available in the Camden area is transported from Philadelphia, although local manufacture is not uncommon. Most recently, the RO reports a decline in trafficking by outlaw motorcycle gangs that traditionally have operated in the area. Rather, independent traffickers have emerged as the principal source of supply.

The Atlantic City RO reports an increase in the availability of methamphetamine during the past year. Half-pound quantities sell for $6,000, while ounce prices range from $800 to $1,100.

Methamphetamine traffickers are predominantly older white males who, in the past, may have been associated with Traditional Organized Crime members or outlaw motorcycle gangs.

NEW ORLEANS FIELD DIVISION

Area of Responsibility

The New Orleans Field Division is responsible for DEA RO's located in Alabama, Arkansas, Louisiana, and Mississippi.

Summary

Methamphetamine is available in small retail quantities in some of the areas covered by the RO's, but is not a serious problem throughout most of the New Orleans Field Division. In Arkansas, however, methamphetamine is readily available in wholesale quantities. California and Texas are reported to be the source areas for much of the methamphetamine seen within the Division.

Prices

Methamphetamine prices range from $18,000 to $20,000 per pound, and $1,600 to $1,800 an ounce.

Abuse

CEWG reports that amphetamine and methamphetamine use continue at low levels in the New Orleans area. Methamphetamine emergency room episodes for the first 3 months of 1990, 1991, and 1992 totaled 11, 10, and 7, respectively. Treatment admissions rose from 0.2 percent (3 admissions) in 1990 to 4 percent (108 admissions) in 1991, then reverted to 0.2 percent (3 admissions) in 1992—of the three 1992 admissions, two were white males and one was a white female.

Availability and Trafficking

The Birmingham, Alabama, RO reports methamphetamine is available in small retail quantities in De Kalb and Franklin Counties, and in the Cullman area.

The Mobile RO reports methamphetamine is available in small retail quantities. Trafficking is limited to outlaw motorcycle gangs who transport methamphetamine to the area from Mississippi for distribution to their associates.

The Baton Rouge and Shreveport RO's report a significant decrease in the availability of methamphetamine. This is due to regulatory legislation at the Federal and State level that has placed strict controls on the purchase of precursor chemicals. In the Shreveport area, methamphetamine is available in ounce quantities although it is encountered infrequently in such amounts. Most methamphetamine is sold in one-eighth ounce or "eight ball" quantities for $250 to $400. Local traffickers are supplied by laboratories operating in California and Texas.

The Jackson, Mississippi, RO reports methamphetamine is available in ounce quantities. Reporting indicates that truck drivers, with associates in California and Texas, provide ounce quantities to the area. Typically, the drugs are transported by commercial long-haul truck drivers based in and/or transiting Mississippi. Distribution usually occurs at area truck stops.

The Little Rock RO reports methamphetamine is readily available in Arkansas. Prices range between $18,000 and $20,000 per pound and $1,600 and $1,800 an ounce. California and Texas are source areas for approximately one-half of the methamphetamine encountered in the area. Vehicles and mail services are utilized by traffickers to transport methamphetamine to Arkansas. Also, methamphetamine is manufactured clandestinely in Arkansas, which represents a continuing problem. Laboratory activity is most prevalent in the northwestern and southwestern portions of the State. Organizations often are comprised of family members. Cooks from California and Texas set up large-scale laboratory operations in Arkansas for distribution points in other States. Arkansas is also a transshipment point for methamphetamine produced in California and Texas for distribution in nearby States.

NEW YORK FIELD DIVISION

Area of Responsibility
The New York Field Division is responsible for DEA RO's located in Albany, Buffalo, Long Island, and Rochester.

Summary
Limited reporting indicates methamphetamine is encountered infrequently and is not a problem within the New York Field Division. When encountered, it is found exclusively among outlaw motorcycle gangs and their associates.

Prices
Methamphetamine is available for $2,000 an ounce.

Abuse
Abuse data and information are not available.

Availability and Trafficking
The center for methamphetamine trafficking and abuse within New York State is the Broome County "Southern Tier" area centered around Binghamton. Historically, this area has been associated with methamphetamine; the area's proximity to eastern Pennsylvania and the access provided by I-81 facilitates trafficking activities. Much of the methamphetamine is believed to be manufactured and distributed by associates of an outlaw motorcycle gang.

The Rochester RO reports that methamphetamine is available in very limited quantities in Rochester, and is encountered more frequently in counties to the south. Reporting suggests an outlaw motorcycle gang distributes methamphetamine exclusively to their close associates.

According to the Long Island RO, availability of methamphetamine has been reduced greatly, if not curtailed completely, due to enforcement operations against an outlaw motorcycle gang.

PHILADELPHIA FIELD DIVISION

Area of Responsibility

The Philadelphia Field Division is responsible for DEA RO's located in Delaware and Pennsylvania.

Summary

Methamphetamine is available in most areas of the Division. Specifically, it is available in small retail quantities in Wilmington, Delaware, and larger quantities in the Pennsylvania cities of Allentown, Harrisburg, and Philadelphia. Primarily, methamphetamine is manufactured utilizing the P2P method of synthesis.

Prices

Methamphetamine is available for $12,000 to $15,000 per pound and $70 to $100 per gram.

Abuse

CEWG reports that during the first half of 1992 only 43 admissions to public drug treatment facilities in Philadelphia were for primary methamphetamine abuse.

Trafficking and Availability

Methamphetamine is available in the Philadelphia DO for $12,000 to $15,000 per pound. Although there are a number of traffickers involved in the production of methamphetamine, most violators are associated with three significant trafficking organizations. P2P is the preferred method of synthesis. Clandestine laboratory operators appear to be ordering P2P precursor chemicals, which are not covered under the CDTA, or obtaining quantities that are below threshold amounts. The ephedrine reduction method of synthesis is encountered rarely.

The Harrisburg RO reports that, in addition to being a source for clandestine laboratory precursor chemicals, Harrisburg is also a consumption area for methamphetamine. Although Harrisburg does not have a large user population for methamphetamine, wholesale quantities are available. Methamphetamine sells for approximately $12,000 per pound and $80 to $100 per gram. Production occurs in rural areas predominantly by independent entrepreneurs with previous criminal histories. Additionally, two or three organizations that operate in Philadelphia transport small quantities of methamphetamine to the Harrisburg area. These groups consist primarily of African-American distributors who were, at one time, members of the original "black mafia" centered in Philadelphia. Members of these same organizations often travel by bus, train, or vehicle to the Harrisburg area on a daily or weekly basis to purchase chemicals necessary in the manufacture of methamphetamine.

Methamphetamine is available in quarter pound and fractional ounce quantities in the Allentown RO area. Outlaw motorcycle gangs may have peripheral involvement in methamphetamine trafficking in the area. Manufacturing possibly is occurring in areas north of Allentown.

The Wilmington RO reports methamphetamine is available in small retail quantities and is manufactured in parts of Pennsylvania and remote areas of southern Delaware. Gram prices range between $70 and $100.

PHOENIX FIELD DIVISION

Area of Responsibility

The Phoenix Field Division is responsible for DEA RO's located in Sierra Vista, Tucson, and Yuma, Arizona.

Summary

Wholesale quantities of methamphetamine are reported in some areas of the Division. Although the clandestine manufacture of methamphetamine occurs locally, the area's proximity to California provides an additional and readily obtainable source of methamphetamine and precursor chemicals.

Prices

Methamphetamine is available for $9,000 to $20,000 per pound, $1,000 to $2,000 per ounce, and $80 to $120 per gram.

Abuse

According to CEWG, methamphetamine-related deaths in Phoenix increased 309 percent (projected figure) between 1991 (4 deaths) and January-November 1992 (15 deaths). Methamphetamine emergency room episodes per 100,000 population have been decreasing: from 25.1 in 1988, to 16.6 in 1989, to 9.5 in 1990, to 8.6 per 100,000 in 1991.

Availability and Trafficking

The Phoenix DO reports methamphetamine is available for $9,000 to $11,000 per pound and $1,000 per ounce. Demand is most prevalent in the Phoenix metropolitan and suburban area among low-income groups. The Phoenix metropolitan area, as well as selected parts of northwestern Arizona, i.e., Bullhead City and Lake Havasu City, are utilized by cooks from California and the southwest to manufacture methamphetamine. The finished product is distributed locally and in California. Methamphetamine also originates from California-based laboratories, particularly in northern San Diego County, and the Riverside—San Bernardino areas. Biker types are responsible for most methamphetamine trafficking in the area. However, the RO is beginning to observe the inclusion of Mexican traffickers in methamphetamine distribution and precursor chemical brokering.

Although enforcement efforts have been increased to combat the problem, precursor chemicals are obtained easily from both legitimate and clandestine sources. Ephedrine smuggled from Mexico offers violators an alternative to the legitimate market. As a result, the availability of methamphetamine and the laboratories that produce it have remained a constant problem in the Phoenix area.

Methamphetamine is readily available in Yuma due to the area's proximity and access to clandestine laboratories in California, particularly San Diego. Methamphetamine also is manufactured clandestinely in the area. Biker types are responsible for a large portion of the methamphetamine production and distribution in Yuma. Gram quantities sell for $80 to $100 and pound quantities average $12,000 to $13,000. Wholesale purity ranges from 50 to 90 percent.

The Tucson RO reports methamphetamine is available for $17,000 to $20,000 per pound, $1,400 to $2,000 an ounce, and $120 per gram. Most traffickers are biker types who may or may not be associated with outlaw motorcycle clubs. Methamphetamine is manufactured clandestinely in the area and also is transported to Tucson from California, particularly from the San Diego area, by automobile or passengers on commercial airlines.

SAN DIEGO FIELD DIVISION

Area of Responsibility

The San Diego Field Division is responsible for RO's located in Calexico, San Ysidro, and Tecate, California.

Summary

The San Diego Field Division serves as a major manufacturing center for the illicit production of methamphetamine, as well as an importation point for precursor chemicals smuggled into the United States from Mexico. Mexican nationals dominate all levels of methamphetamine trafficking.

Prices

Prices for pound quantities range from $7,000 to $12,000.

Abuse

According to CEWG, indicators continue to show decreases in methamphetamine abuse in San Diego, suggesting that the epidemic has peaked; however, overdose deaths attributable to methamphetamine increased from 8 methamphetamine-only deaths in 1991 to 14 in the first 10 months of 1992, a 75-percent increase. Methamphetamine continues to be a drug preferred by whites: 86 percent of admissions to public drug treatment facilities for primary methamphetamine abuse are white, 82 percent are male, and 50 percent are in their 30's.

Methamphetamine emergency room episodes continue their downward trend from 1,372 in 1988 to 515 in 1991, a 62-percent decline. When emergency room data are provided a rate per 100,000 population, the decrease is equally sharp—from 65.4 episodes per 100,000 population in 1988 to 22.9 in 1992. These numbers, however, are considerably higher than those for the total United States, which range from 4.1 per 100,000 in 1988 to 2.2 in 1992.

Methamphetamine representation in treatment declined from 39 percent of 1988 admissions to 36 percent of 1992 admissions. The percentage of methamphetamine admissions who are white decreased modestly, from 84 percent in 1988 to 73 percent in 1992. Correspondingly, the number of African-Americans (6 % in 1992) and Hispanics (14 % in 1992) increased. Over time, the proportion of males in treatment has grown; in 1992, 54 percent of admissions were male. The percentage who reported smoking and injecting as primary administration routes increased substantially over the past 4 years, while the percentage who report inhaling has decreased. Smoking increased from 1 percent in 1988 to 17 percent in 1992; injecting increased from 22 percent in 1988 to 31 percent in 1992.

In 1992, 21 percent of males and 23 percent of females tested by DUF were positive for amphetamines. These percentages represent a slight increase for men and a slight decrease for women from 1991 figures. Overall, however, the trend for amphetamine use among the adult-arrestee population is clearly down.

Availability and Trafficking

Mexican nationals dominate the methamphetamine market at every level, from manufacturing to distribution. Information obtained from local police departments reflects the same scenario at the street level. These departments report an increase in the number of clandestine laboratory cooks of Hispanic descent, most of whom follow a recipe that had been purchased from another group. Investigations have indicated that some of the organizations have begun to invest their profits in U.S. real estate, although most of the illicit proceeds are believed to be returned to Mexico.

Enforcement activity, combined with legislation directed at chemical suppliers, has not been a sufficient deterrence to illicit manufacturing. Clandestine laboratory activity continues to flourish even though laboratory operators are forced to seek alternative sources for precursors and other chemicals. A diversity of tactics are utilized by violators in an effort to circumvent the CDTA. Illicit manufacturers often obtain precursors from companies in different States to avoid detection by law enforcement authorities. Another means of circumvention involves the use of ephedrine tablets. Laboratory operators grind the tablets in food processors and use denatured alcohol to extract the ephedrine from the binder that holds the tablets together.

San Diego has become an importation point for ephedrine entering the United States from Mexico. This may be due to the fact that many Mexican organizations are engaged in smuggling and brokering ephedrine. Review of port of entry seizures revealed that ephedrine seizures have increased dramatically. During FY 1992, approximately 1,970 pounds of ephedrine were seized at various ports of entry in the Division. Numerous interceptions at or between ports of entry reflect concealment techniques for smuggling ephedrine, which closely duplicate those used by marijuana smugglers. Inspectors have discovered ephedrine concealed in specially constructed compartments in various vehicular conveyances. In other instances, backpackers are recruited to transport kilogram quantities of the precursor into the United States. This is evidenced by the fact that U.S. Border Patrol Agents have seized abandoned duffle bags containing ephedrine.

SAN FRANCISCO FIELD DIVISION

Area of Responsibility

The San Francisco Field Division is responsible for DEA RO's located in Fresno, Sacramento, and San Jose.

Summary

Within the Division, there has been a significant increase in the number of methamphetamine laboratory seizures involving Mexican nationals. Reporting indicates that Mexican trafficking organizations may be replacing many traditional wholesale suppliers of methamphetamine.

Prices

Methamphetamine is available for $4,000 to $10,000 per pound.

Abuse

According to CEWG, the medical examiner's total of methamphetamine deaths has been about 20 per half-year during the most recent 3 years, except for early 1990 when the count was approximately twice as much. The decedents were predominantly male (84%), overwhelmingly white (89%), and over half (64%) were over 30 years of age.

A special study of methamphetamine users is currently underway, under the direction of the Institute for Scientific Analysis. Some 100 subjects have been drawn in the San Francisco Bay area. The initial sample showed the familiar demographics of the "speed" user:

- male (more than two-thirds);
- white (more than four-fifths); and
- 35-years old (median age).

Of the males, nearly 40 percent are homosexual or bisexual. About 70 percent of the sample cited injection as the preferred route of administration.

Availability and Trafficking

The San Francisco DO reports an outlaw motorcycle gang has a profound influence on methamphetamine trafficking and price. In terms of organization, they are sophisticated in the manufacture and distribution of methamphetamine throughout the United States. There exists a certain amount of autonomy within the group, whereby some members are involved with trafficking while others may concentrate on financial aspects or their own criminal activities. Increasingly, this gang appears be moving away from direct involvement with manufacturing operations, relying more on their associates to handle such matters. Primarily they finance laboratory operations.

Prior to 1993, large quantities of hydriodic acid were purchased in Oakland, California, by organized groups of Mexicans, usually based in the Los Angeles area. As of January 1, 1993, the State of California amended its existing chemical laws and regulations by including hydriodic acid as a precursor. The amendments require licensure by the State to sell, transfer, or otherwise furnish hydriodic acid. In addition, it requires reports of such transactions to the State. Prior to the amendments, three rogue chemical firms in the San Francisco area were responsible for supplying approximately 90 percent of the hydriodic acid utilized in the clandestine manufacture of methamphetamine via the ephedrine reduction method. Approximately 80 percent of the supply originated from one company in particular.

The Monterey, Sacramento, and San Jose offices report an increasing involvement of Mexican traffickers in methamphetamine manufacture and distribution. Reporting suggests that traditional traffickers, i.e., motorcycle gangs, are obtaining methamphetamine from Mexican sources.

The Fresno RO reports that a significant number of Mexican methamphetamine traffickers have surfaced during investigations initially directed towards Mexican cocaine and heroin organizations. Mexicans have become the predominant manufacturers and distributors of methamphetamine in the Fresno area. It appears that control of these organizations is based in Los Angeles. Reporting indicates the shipment of precursor chemicals and finished product between Los Angeles and Fresno currently is taking place. Many subjects of methamphetamine investigations have criminal associates in the Los Angeles area.

Low-level members of various Mexican trafficking organizations are hired to perform a variety of functions such as procuring chemicals, securing the laboratory site, setting up the laboratory, and performing the cook. Each group has a different function and is generally insulated from the higher ranking members of the organization. An individual acting in a foreman or supervisory capacity may be responsible for overseeing the various facets of the operation. The foreman appears to be an intermediary between those who are financing the operation and the lower echelon of the organization.

Laboratory sites are selected in the rural farm areas surrounding Bakersfield, Fresno, and Modesto. Organizations purchase property or pay for the use of another individual's property on a temporary basis in order to acquire a secure site to manufacture. Most manufacturing operations occur on property that is being rented by farm laborers. The renter is paid up to $10,000 for use of the property. The same location may be utilized multiple times and by various organizations. Most cooks occur during the weekend when farm laborers are absent from the fields.

Organizations may operate three to six laboratories simultaneously with each laboratory containing four to eight 22-liter vessels. Illegal aliens, usually from Michoacan, Mexico, are hired as helpers or to maintain the reaction process and operate like an assembly line. In many instances, condensers, which prevent fumes from emitting into the atmosphere, are not utilized, thus creating an extremely hazardous situation.

Three to four chemists visit each laboratory periodically to ensure the operation is functioning properly. Generally, chemicals are stored in stash houses and brought to the laboratory site on a limited basis. Usually, the amount of chemicals present at the laboratory is restricted to that required to complete a particular cook.

A certain amount of cooperation exists among many of these organizations as links between these groups were already established through their long-standing cocaine, heroin, and marijuana connections. Organizations assist each other in obtaining chemicals, glassware, and finished product. Chemists may work for numerous organizations depending upon who is conducting the operation and the earnings they will receive. Chemical brokers may supply numerous manufacturing organizations with chemicals.

SEATTLE FIELD DIVISION

Area of Responsibility

The Seattle Field Division is responsible for DEA RO's located in Alaska, Idaho, Montana, Oregon, and Washington State.

Summary

Methamphetamine is readily available throughout the Division. The CDTA primarily has impacted small-scale operators while larger laboratories continue to operate. Precursor chemicals often are purchased in Canada and then smuggled across the United States–Canada border.

Prices

Methamphetamine is available for $12,000 to $16,000 per pound, $900 to $1,500 per ounce, and $50 to $175 per gram.

Abuse

CEWG reports that there have been only four stimulant-related deaths (two amphetamine and two methamphetamine) since three were reported by the Medical Examiner in 1988. All seven victims from 1988 through the first quarter of 1992 were white males ranging from 23 to 44 years of age. Three of the victims injected the drug.

Availability and Trafficking

CEWG reports that a majority of the precursor chemicals destined for methamphetamine laboratories in the Pacific Northwest are smuggled across the Canada–Washington State land border, according to DEA Seattle and the U.S. Customs Service (USCS). Nearly all such precursor chemical seizures by USCS agents occur in Blaine, Washington. In terms of traffic volume, Blaine is one of the busiest ports of entry between the United States and Canada.

According to the USCS, an average of one major methamphetamine precursor chemical seizure per month has been made at the Blaine Port of Entry since January 1, 1990. One-quarter of the seized chemicals are phenylacetic acid. Other precursor chemical seizures involve methylamine, ephedrine, lead acetate, and P2P.

The Boise, Idaho, RO reports that during the past 2 years, methamphetamine availability has remained constant. Pound quantities sell for $15,000, while ounce prices range between $900 and $1,000. Methamphetamine is encountered most frequently around metropolitan areas but is also available throughout the State. It appears that most methamphetamine distributed in Idaho originates from out of State sources, principally from Oregon, Washington, and California. Most of those involved with methamphetamine trafficking are biker types or are associated with outlaw motorcycle gangs. There is, however, growing involvement of Hispanic traffickers who obtain methamphetamine from sources, usually relatives, residing in California.

Methamphetamine is readily available in Montana. Billings is the predominant area for methamphetamine trafficking and distribution. Interstates 90 and 94 may be utilized by traffickers to distribute methamphetamine from Billings to smaller communities. Clandestine laboratory activity also occurs in Missoula and largely is associated with biker types. Militant supremacists are involved in the manufacture and distribution of methamphetamine and other drugs, particularly in northwestern rural areas. Increasingly, laboratory operators from out of State, particularly Oregon, Washington, and Wyoming, construct laboratories in Montana. The finished product is distributed in Montana and other States. Cooks occur most frequently in mobile homes. Chemicals may be supplied by sources residing out of State or in Canada.

The Portland, Oregon, RO reports methamphetamine is readily available with pound quantities averaging $15,000. The CDTA has made it more difficult for low-level manufacturers to obtain chemicals. This is evidenced by a decrease in the number of seizures involving small laboratories in the metropolitan area. However, larger laboratories are finding alternate sources for chemicals. Precursors often are supplied by rogue chemical companies operating in California and also are smuggled across the United States–Canada border. Methamphetamine remains readily available and prices for the finished product have remained constant.

Operators are becoming more efficient and are constructing laboratories that are larger and more sophisticated in their production techniques. It is common to encounter a laboratory in which the operator is in possession of an assortment of chemicals and utilizes diverse methods to manufacture methamphetamine. Laboratories that operate in a metropolitan area generally will employ a production method which creates less odor, thus, decreasing the possibility or likelihood of detection. Cooks interact and associate with one another and exchange chemicals, recipes, etc. They are known to manufacture for numerous distributors rather than one organization. It is not uncommon for an organization to have multiple laboratory sites.

The Spokane RO reports methamphetamine is available in pound and ounce quantities. The average price is $12,000 to $15,000 per pound, and $1,500 an ounce. Most methamphetamine manufactured in the area is destined for points south, in California and Oregon. Multipound quantities are transported to these areas most often by vehicle. Traffickers often are associated indirectly with outlaw motorcycle gangs or local biker groups. In an attempt to circumvent the CDTA, traffickers currently are purchasing precursor chemicals in Canada, which are subsequently smuggled across the United States–Canada border. Consequently, violators are more likely to risk detection by law enforcement authorities in order to obtain the necessary chemicals to manufacture.

The Eugene RO reports methamphetamine is readily available at $9,000 to $14,000 per pound, $800 to $1,500 an ounce, and $50 to $175 per gram. Most laboratory operators know, or associate with, other manufacturers and often share or obtain needed chemicals. There is a prison network of individuals that instructs other prisoners to cook using different methods.

The Seattle RO reports methamphetamine is readily available at $12,000 to $16,000 per pound, and $1,000 to $1,200 an ounce. The CDTA has had a significant effect in decreasing the number of laboratories operating in the area. However, availability of methamphetamine has not declined. This may be due to the fact that small scale operators have been significantly affected by chemical legislation while larger laboratories continue to operate. Laboratories now being seized are producing larger quantities than laboratories seized 2 years ago. In recent years, an increasing number of independent entrepreneurs have become involved in methamphetamine trafficking. Cooks manufacture for various organized groups. Outlaw motorcycle gangs also are involved in methamphetamine trafficking in the area, principally financing clandestine laboratory operations.

ST. LOUIS FIELD DIVISION

Area of Responsibility
The St. Louis Field Division is responsible for DEA RO's located in Illinois, Iowa, Kansas, Missouri, Nebraska, and South Dakota.

Summary
Methamphetamine is available in varying quantities in all areas within the Division and is reported to be supplied primarily by sources in California and Texas.

Prices
Methamphetamine is available for $10,000 to $20,000 per pound, $1,100 to $2,200 per ounce, and $100 to $150 per gram.

Abuse
CEWG reports that methamphetamine abuse is negligible within the city of St. Louis; however, abuse is relatively prevalent in rural areas as evidenced by the number of emergency room episodes and admissions to public drug treatment facilities.

Availability and Trafficking
The Des Moines RO reports methamphetamine manufacturing and distribution appears to be increasing in Iowa. Methamphetamine is available for $17,000 per pound, $1,400 to $2,000 an ounce, and $100 to $125 per gram. Demand is centered in rural areas and small cities located outside of Des Moines. Most methamphetamine originates from sources in California, specifically Los Angeles and San Diego. Multipound quantities are transported to the area by vehicle or in carry-on luggage aboard commercial airlines.

The Kansas City RO reports methamphetamine is available for $1,100 to $1,500 per ounce and $100 per gram. Sources in California and Texas supply the majority of methamphetamine available, which is transported predominantly by vehicle. Southwest Missouri and southeastern Kansas are secondary source areas. In some instances, cooks from California and Texas are recruited by local organizations to manufacture methamphetamine.

In the St. Louis area, methamphetamine is available for $1,500 to $2,000 per ounce, and $100 to $150 per gram. The drug primarily is consumed in southwest St. Louis and outlying counties. Snorting and eating methamphetamine are the most popular methods of ingestion among middle- and lower-income groups. California is the number-one supplier to the area. Reporting indicates that methamphetamine possibly is supplied by sources in Texas.

The Cape Girardeau RO reports that methamphetamine is available in ounce quantities and sells for $2,000 to $2,500. Casual users smoke, eat, or drink methamphetamine. Usually laboratories are operated by white males from southwest Arkansas, Missouri, and Texas. Of the methamphetamine that is not produced locally, most originates from California and Texas. Methamphetamine trafficking has increased in southern Illinois in Hamilton, Jefferson, Wayne, and White counties.

The Springfield RO reports methamphetamine is readily available with prices averaging $18,000 to $20,000 per pound, and $1,900 to $2,200 per ounce. The CDTA has made the acquisition of precursor chemicals by laboratory operators extremely difficult. Small-scale laboratory operators are affected most by this legislation. Intelligence and investigative reporting indicates that California and Texas remain source areas for methamphetamine distributed in central and southwest Missouri.

Demand for methamphetamine is centered in Springfield, where larger quantities are available. Groups that have been identified and/or arrested for methamphetamine trafficking are predominantly white males with extensive criminal histories.

The Omaha, Nebraska, RO reports that methamphetamine is available in ounce and gram quantities. Prices range between $1,100 and $1,800 per ounce, and between $80 and $125 per gram. Methamphetamine is a drug of choice in the small towns and agricultural areas of central and western Nebraska. Middle- and low-income groups snort or inject methamphetamine. Some methamphetamine originates from sources in California.

The Sioux Falls RO reports methamphetamine is available primarily in small retail quantities, although it is occasionally encountered in ounce quantities. Methamphetamine originates from out-of-State sources, particularly California,

The Rapid City Post of Duty reports methamphetamine is available for $10,000 per pound, $900 to $1,000 per ounce, and $50 to $80 per gram. California is the main source of supply with some methamphetamine transported to the area periodically from Montana, and, to a lesser degree, Colorado and Wyoming. In addition to automobiles, traffickers utilize U.S. mail and UPS services to transport methamphetamine.

WASHINGTON, DC, FIELD DIVISION

Area of Responsibility
The Washington, DC, Field Division is responsible for RO's located in Maryland, Virginia, and West Virginia.

Summary
Limited quantities of methamphetamine are available in some areas of the Division, with the exception of Roanoke, where pound quantities are available. Methamphetamine rarely is encountered in the Washington, DC, and Baltimore, Maryland, DO's.

Prices
Methamphetamine prices range from $12,000 to $14,000 per pound, $1,200 to $1,700 per ounce, and $75 to $100 per gram.

Abuse
Abuse data and information are not available.

Trafficking and Availability
Methamphetamine is available in ounce and gram quantities in the Charleston, West Virginia, RO. Prices range from $1,600 to $1,700 per ounce, and $75 to $100 per gram. Availability fluctuates depending upon the accessibility and proximity to clandestine laboratory operations.

The Roanoke RO reports methamphetamine is readily available in smaller cities and rural areas. Prices range from $12,000 to $14,000 per pound, $1,200 to $1,400 an ounce, and $100 per gram. Rural areas around, and to the south of, Roanoke are source areas for methamphetamine. The drug is more popular in the blue-collar community and is primarily snorted or ingested orally. Independent entrepreneurs and outlaw motorcycle gangs are involved in methamphetamine trafficking.

Methamphetamine is encountered infrequently in the Norfolk, Virginia, RO. Trafficking is controlled by outlaw motorcycle gangs.

The Richmond RO reports methamphetamine is available in limited quantities and sells for $100 per gram. Trafficking is centered primarily in white, blue-collar neighborhoods. Reporting indicates that outlaw motorcycle gangs and commercial truckers are responsible for the vast majority of methamphetamine distributed in the area. California and Florida have been identified as source localities.

APPENDIX

The National Household Survey on Drug Abuse, sponsored by the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA), is a series of national surveys to measure the prevalence and frequency of drug use among the U.S. household population aged 12 and over. The survey samples the civilian non-institutionalized population living in households, college dormitories, and military installations and, therefore, does not include some segments of the U.S. population that may contain a substantial proportion of drug users, such as transients and those who are incarcerated. The SAMHSA publishes survey results on an annual basis.

The Drug Abuse Warning Network (DAWN) is a large-scale data collection system implemented in 1972 and designed to be an indicator of the severity, scope, and nature of the nation's substance abuse problem. The purpose of DAWN is to provide data on the incidence of drug abuse-related episodes from participating hospital emergency rooms located in 21 U.S. metropolitan areas. DAWN is managed by the SAMHSA.

The Community Epidemiology Work Group (CEWG) is sponsored by the National Institute on Drug Abuse and is composed of epidemiologists and drug treatment experts, operating independently of law enforcement, who meet semiannually to discuss drug availability and use trends in the United States.

The National Institute of Justice (NIJ) established the **Drug Use Forecasting Program (DUF)** in 1987 to identify and monitor trends in drug use among arrestees in the United States. Each quarter, at central booking facilities in 24 participating jurisdictions, arrestees are asked to participate in a voluntary, anonymous interview and to provide a urine specimen. Urine samples are analyzed to detect the use of cocaine, opiates, marijuana, PCP, methadone, benzodiazepines (such as Valium), methaqualone, propoxyphene (such as Darvon), barbiturates, and amphetamines. The results of the urinalysis testing are published by the NIJ on a quarterly and annual basis.

The Chemical Diversion and Trafficking Act (CDTA) of 1988 was passed to provide the Federal Government with a means to regulate chemicals that are being diverted continuously for illegal production of controlled substances. The CDTA originally placed under Federal control the distribution of 12 precursor and 8 essential chemicals used in the production of illicit drugs, as well as the distribution of tableting and encapsulating machines. During 1990, additional chemicals and their salts were added to the CDTA as part of the Crime Control Act, which brought the total number of listed precursor chemicals to 24 and the number of essential chemicals to 9. The CDTA requires that all firms which handle these regulated chemicals maintain readily retrievable receipt and distribution records. It also makes the reporting of suspicious orders mandatory. The law also granted DEA the authority to stop an import or export of a chemical not destined for legitimate medical, scientific, or commercial use.

Figure 6 identifies those chemicals utilized in the manufacture methamphetamine, which currently are regulated by the CDTA. The list sets forth the domestic thresholds specified in the final rule.

Figure 6

Regulated Chemicals	
Chemical	**Threshold by Weight**
Ephedrine and its salts, optical isomers, salts of optical isomers	1 kilogram
Phenylacetic acid and its salts	1 kilogram
Pseudoephedrine and its salts, optical isomers	1 kilogram
Methylamine and its salts	1 kilogram
Acetic anhydride	1,023 kilograms[1]
Acetone	150 kilograms[2]
Benzyl Chloride	1 kilogram
Benzyl Cyanide	1 kilogram
Hydriodic Acid (57%)	1.7 kilograms[3]

[1] Alternative regulated amount equals 250 gallons.
[2] Alternative regulated amount equals 50 gallons.
[3] Alternative regulated amount equals 1 liter.

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