

Anchorage Police Department Regulations and Procedures Manual	Operational Procedures 3.02.035	
Policy and Procedure Title Clandestine Laboratory Enforcement	Effective Date June 23, 2022	Page 1 of 4
Replaces Prior Policy: August 10, 2009	Approved by: Chief Michael Kerle	

This policy is the internal use only and does not enlarge an employee's civil liability in any way. The policy should not be construed as creating a higher duty of care, in an evidentiary sense, with respect to third party civil claims against employees. A violation of this policy, if proven, can only form the basis of a complaint by this department for non-judicial administrative action in accordance with the laws governing employee discipline.

3.02.035 Clandestine Laboratory Enforcement

PURPOSE

To establish a procedure that will afford the best degree of safety to both law enforcement officers, and other persons involved in the discovery, investigation and dismantling of a clandestine drug laboratory.

POLICY

The policy of the Anchorage Police Department is to ensure public safety, minimize employee exposure incidents, reduce the spread of chemical contamination, assure maximum prosecution of perpetrators, and compliance with Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) regulations relating to the investigation, seizure and dismantling of clandestine drug laboratories.

DISCUSSION

Clandestine drug laboratories pose a significant risk of injury and death to the public as well as officers not prepared or equipped to enter such environments. These risks include fire and explosion, inhalation hazards, chemical burns, long term health effects, and the spread of contamination to department and personally owned property.

Clandestine drug laboratories are regulated by OSHA once discovered by law enforcement personnel. The Anchorage Police Department will ensure that OSHA requirements are understood and complied with by those members of the department who intentionally or knowingly enter clandestine drug laboratory environments.

DEFINITIONS

Clandestine Laboratory: An illegal operation consisting of a sufficient combination of apparatus and chemicals that either is being, has been, or could be used in the manufacture or synthesis of controlled substances, precursors, or necessary chemicals for the manufacture of controlled substances.

Clandestine Laboratory Specialist: A member of the department who has attended an OSHA approved 40-hour clandestine laboratory safety certification class and is currently clandestine laboratory certified by attending an 8-hour refresher course within the past 12 months. Members must also comply with the required ongoing medical monitoring.

Contamination: Occurs anytime a person inhales airborne substances, is injected, skin penetration occurs, or a person ingests by mouth from eating, smoking or chewing prior to being completely decontaminated. Contamination is also skin contact where a splash or any contact with a substance to exposed skin occurs or where the substance passes through protective clothes or gloves. Contamination may occur to either persons or property.

Exigent Situation: For the purpose of this policy is defined as but not limited to the following: any situation that could result in death, serious injury, contamination to the environment, or a lab that if left unattended could result in explosion.

PROCEDURE

I. CLANDESTINE DRUG LABORATORIES

A. Potential Danger: Clandestine laboratories producing illicit drugs are frequently operated with little or no safety precautions. Immediate dangers include fire, explosion, inhalation of harmful or toxic fumes, and skin contact with dangerous chemicals. Exposure to such chemicals found in such laboratories by personnel without proper training and protection may cause immediate incapacitation, cumulative, or damaging effects to the body.

B. Safety Procedures: Safety is the foremost consideration. All personnel should exercise extreme caution when approaching or working in the area of a suspected clandestine lab or components of a lab.

C. General Precautions: Until trained personnel arrive and take control of a suspected clandestine laboratory, or partial component lab, employees should take general precautions including:

1. Do not enter the structure/vehicle, or move a vehicle, unless properly trained and have the necessary safety equipment to do so, or exigent circumstances exist. If an exigent situation justifies entry into a suspected clandestine laboratory, the time in the laboratory should be as brief as possible. Persons entering the lab should exercise extreme care not to touch anything. Breathing of any chemicals or fumes may be hazardous. Even life saving efforts may be discouraged by unprotected officers if such action requires the rescuer to enter a confined space such as an underground laboratory, a trailer with a single access point, or buried vehicle or container, etc.
2. Employees should never attempt to smell, taste, or touch chemicals or substances from a suspected clandestine lab.

3. Employees shall not eat, drink, smoke, chew gum or tobacco and avoid placing their hands to their mouth or face.
4. Recognizing that fumes can be deadly, an officer should maintain a safe distance from the suspected laboratory and avoid being downwind and downgrade from the lab. The scene should be protected as any other crime scene, with the possible exception of expanding the tape barrier consistent with the incident. The expansion of the crime scene will help eliminate inadvertent exposure and cross contamination.
5. Persons should wash hands, face and exposed skin immediately upon leaving the area of a clandestine lab. If a person has been contaminated by physical contact that person should seek immediate decontamination by either the Fire Department or DEA.
6. Personnel should isolate the structure or vehicle involved and the immediate area to provide the maximum protection possible to persons in the area.
7. Previous clandestine laboratory cases have reported suspects throwing, or attempting to throw, toxic, volatile or caustic chemicals on law enforcement officers, thereby creating a substantial risk of serious harm, or death. Officers need to take appropriate actions to avoid contamination or to stop the suspect's act in these situations.

II. OFFICER ON SCENE ACTIONS--GENERAL

The first Officer to discover a clandestine laboratory site may potentially be exposed to significant hazards. Initial actions at the scene are to preserve individual safety and protect other personnel and the environment.

A. Officer's Responsibilities--Specific:

1. Upon discovery of a clandestine laboratory operation, officers must first ensure the safety of citizens and officers.
 - a). Evacuate lab or storage location.
 - b). Advise all persons that no smoking is allowed within 500 feet of the site.
 - c). Cordon off site location out to safe distance from the vapor area.
 - d). Stay upwind/upgrade and at a recommended safe distance of at least 100 yards (300 ft.).
 - e). Allow no one to enter or re-enter the site, unless they are a clandestine laboratory specialist.
 - f). Detain/arrest suspects outside the location.
 - g). Detain and interview possible witnesses outside the location.
 - h). Notify supervisor

- i). Any Department personnel who inadvertently enter what is determined to be a clandestine laboratory scene should remain at the scene but leave the structure or contaminated area and wait for decontamination and further instructions.
- j). Do not impound or move a vehicle that contains a lab and components of a lab. Qualified investigators will determine disposition and possible transport of the vehicle when appropriate and safe.

B. Supervisor's Responsibilities--Specific:

1. Notify Sergeant or Lieutenant of APD narcotics unit of possible clandestine laboratory discovery.
2. Until status of existence of clandestine laboratory can be determined by a site safety officer, no uniformed or civilian, personnel shall be allowed into the isolated area, to include the possible clan lab itself.
3. Supervisor will confirm that all exposed or contaminated personnel complete an exposure report and workers compensation paperwork. Contact AFD HAZMAT team for response. All persons who were exposed should be decontaminated, including suspects.

END OF DOCUMENT