

	STANDARD OPERATING PROCEDURE State Form 39870 (R/S-06)	Reference Number INV-023
	Subject Illicit Hazardous Environments (IHE)	
	Special Instructions Replaces INV-023 dated April 4, 2024	Effective Date October 24, 2025

I. PURPOSE

Establish guidelines for the safe entry and neutralization of Illicit Hazardous Environments (IHE)s and the utilization, selection, and training of the IHE Team.

II. POLICY

Initial entry into a suspected IHE site shall always be made by IHE Team members. Seizing and processing IHEs shall be accomplished in stages in accordance with the safety procedures outlined in the IHE Safety Manual.

III. Definition

A. Illicit Hazardous Environments (IHE) - any environment, regardless of location, where an illegal drug activity involves the use of hazardous chemicals. IHE include but are not limited to, operations that involve the synthesis, cultivation, recovery, crystallization, extraction, and dosing of illicit substances. Many of the IHE violate the Controlled Substances Act. Examples are: clandestine methamphetamine laboratories, conversion and extraction operations, tableting operations, or laboratories and processing operations for fentanyl and fentanyl related substances which may pose a risk to public health or the environment.

IV. PROCEDURE

A. Locating a suspected or potential environment.

1. When a suspected IHE, remnants of an IHE, or chemicals normally associated with IHE operation are encountered, officers shall immediately STOP-exit the location or suspect vehicle and notify the district duty officer of the district where the suspected environment were discovered.

Note: The Federal Occupational Safety and Health Act (OSHA) and Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA) guidelines strictly prohibit entry into a suspected IHE by persons other than certified IHE team members.

B. Activation of the IHE Team.

1. The designated IHE Team response coordinator shall be notified when:

- a. A Department employee; or
- b. Another criminal justice agency has located a possible active, inactive, or potential environment.

2. Upon notification, the response coordinator shall contact the requesting officer to determine the location and type of environment, all known information relative to suspects, and all other relevant

information; and

3. Contact either the IHE Team directly or request the district duty officer to do so.

a. IHE Team members shall be advised of the situation and the proper response protocol.

b. IHE Team call-outs shall be done on a scheduled rotation basis or by geographic proximity to the suspected lab site.

c. Once the responding team has been identified, the originating district duty officer or IHE Team member shall notify Operations of the following information:

(i) The date and time the lab was located;

(ii) The case agent's name;

(iii) The names of other certified lab officers who are/or will be processing the scene; and

(iv) The location of the lab (including address and county name).

C. IHE sites.

1. Only trained and certified IHE Team members shall enter any location to serve a search warrant or make an arrest at sites suspected of containing or have contained an IHE or is believed to have chemical hardware or components used in an IHE. Once the site safety officer and/or team chemist have deemed the location safe, other officers may enter the location.

2. In all cases, where a known operational IHE exists, Department policy is to "wait out" the suspect(s) or utilize other covert means to gain lawful entry to prevent or/limit a volatile chemical reaction, unless an immediate life-threatening situation occurs.

3. During an operation, if a team member(s) has been exposed to any amount of any chemical, by physical contact or by inhalation, the team member(s) shall complete an Injury and Illness (I&I) Report (on Shield), a PD-49, and be examined by the Department's physician. The PD-49 and physician's report shall be forwarded through channels, to the Superintendent.

4. Upon the completion of at the on-scene processing, the IHE Team case agent or the district duty officer shall notify Operations of the applicable case report number and the type of environment processed.

D. Selection Process for Vacancies

1. The IHE Team will solicit volunteers from sworn personnel and the Laboratory Division to fill IHE vacancies. However, if enough volunteers are not found to sufficiently staff the team sworn personnel may be assigned to fill vacant positions.

2. Any eligible Department member who desires to become a member of the IHE Team shall submit a memo, through channels, to the Investigations Division Commander.

3. A team member requesting to leave the IHE team shall submit a memo, through channels, to the Investigations Division Commander for consideration and approval.

E. TRAINING

1. Department IHE Team personnel shall be properly trained, medically evaluated, and utilized in accordance with all Department SOPs and the standards set forth in the Department's IHE Team Safety Manual.

F. This procedure is to be used in conjunction with all relevant Department regulations, rules, policies, and procedures.