

Indicators – Certain activities are common at many meth houses. Generally, one or two of these indicators does not mean you have a meth house in your neighborhood.

Indicators are not always evidence of a meth house. These are circumstances that cumulatively create a reasonable amount of suspicion that warrants further investigation. The following are some of the indicators you can look for or that can be noted on a log sheet.

Traffic

- Vehicles stopping for short stays of 20 minutes or less, just long enough for someone to go in and make a buy.
- An inordinate number of vehicles.
- Cars left running with someone in the car while another runs inside.
- Suspicious vehicles, clean plates on a dirty car, damage consistent with stolen cars, like punched locks.
- Influxes of increased traffic.
- The house has different characteristics when traffic picks up, such as a new light is turned on, or a blind being left partially open, some kind of signal that they have drugs available.

Foot Traffic

- People parking away from the premises and walking in.
- Unkempt, disoriented or paranoid visitors or other neighbors.
- People carrying in tools, electronics, or other items that may be used to sell or trade for drugs.

Change in Conditions

- Accumulations of trash or junk.
- Deterioration of the premises or grounds.
- Dismantling of vehicles, machinery, or other component items that are not reassembled. Often the high gives them nervous energy to start projects but they don't have the ability to concentrate long enough to put things back together.

Characteristics

- Garage door never open.
- Blinds always closed or windows boarded up.
- Chemical containers being brought in/out or left around the premises.
- Drug paraphernalia found in the neighborhood.
- Lots of 1-5 gallon jugs around the premises.
- Chemical or caustic smells emitting from the house or vehicles.
- Rough lumber construction being carried inside; people will sometimes build interior rooms to conceal marijuana grow operations.

Occupants

- Diminished hygiene.
- Occupants go outside to smoke.
- Occupants never leave/don't work.

- Occupant is awake or sleeps for days at a time.
- Unattended/neglected pets.
- Children not being watched/cared for/not going to school.
- Frequent parties.
- Lots of young visitors, especially when the occupants do not have children of that age group.

Surroundings

- Increased crime in the neighborhood, especially crimes of opportunity like vehicle thefts and burglaries.
- Other neighbors exhibiting unusual behavior, frequenting the drug house, or defending the occupants.

The same Constitutional provisions that protect law-abiding citizens also protect suspected criminals. All citizens have the right to freedom from unlawful searches and seizures of their person, their vehicles and their homes. The same rules apply to you as they do to the occupants of the suspected meth house in your neighborhood.

Tangible, credible evidence needs to be collected in order to obtain a search warrant. Even after a search warrant is served, there are many processes that have to take place prior to a trial. All of these things take time, sometimes many months. While all this is going on, the same suspects may be back at their house selling drugs again.

Diligence is one of the most successful traits needed to combat a meth house. These problems will not be resolved overnight. It takes the combined efforts of citizens and public and private agencies to rid a neighborhood of a meth house. There may be times when fear and frustration may cause you to want to just give up or move, but citizens should be committed to obtaining long term results in order to take back control of their neighborhoods.

Meth houses come in many varieties. Some are simply places where meth is sold or used. Others are also places where meth is made (a “meth lab”).

Meth houses are always dangerous, and should be treated with extreme caution. People that are addicted to meth, or who have used meth for a length of time, are often irritable, paranoid and potentially violent. Citizens should avoid any confrontation with a person suspected of being under the influence of meth. Your personal safety should always be your first priority.