

The Warning Signs of Drug Activity

NEIGHBORS MAY OBSERVE:

1. High traffic—cars and pedestrians stopping at a home for only brief periods. Traffic may be cyclical—increasing on weekends or late at night, or minimal for a few weeks and then intense for a period of a few days—particularly pay days.
2. Visitors appear to be acquaintances rather than friends.
3. People bring “valuables” into the home - televisions, bikes, VCR, cameras-and leave empty-handed.
4. Visitors may sit in a car for awhile after leaving the residence or may leave one person in the car while the other visits.
5. “Lookouts,” frequently younger people, tend to hang around the property during heavy traffic hours.
6. Various signs such as people exchanging small packets for cash, people using drugs while sitting in their cars, syringes on the lawn, or other paraphernalia lying about.
7. Regular activity at extremely late hours - frequent commotion between midnight and 4:00 a.m. on week nights. (Both cocaine and methamphetamine are stimulants - users tend to stay up at night.)

LANDLORDS MAY OBSERVE:

Failure to pay utility bills or rent, deposit and rent paid in cash, failure to maintain the house in appropriate condition, and/or general damage to the property. Some dealers smoke or inject much of their profits - as they get more involved in the drugs, they are more likely to ignore bills, maintenance, housekeeping and yard work.

DISTRIBUTION:

“Distributors” are those who sell larger quantities of drugs to individual dealers or other small distributors. They are the “wholesale” component while dealers are the “retail” component. If the distributors are not taking the drugs themselves, they can be difficult to identify. A combination of the following indicators may be significant:

1. Expensive vehicles that seem out of place for that area. Some distributors make it a practice to spend their money on items that are easily moved – so they might drive a \$50,000 car while renting a \$20,000 house.
2. Regular car switching, especially at odd hours – the people arrive in one car and leave in another. You may also witness the switching of license plates.
3. A tendency to make frequent late-night “deliveries.”

Is There a Methamphetamine Lab in Your Neighborhood?

✓ those that apply:

- _____ Unusual, strong odors (like cat urine, fingernail polish remover, ammonia, ether, sweaty gym bag)
- _____ Unusual number of chemical containers near the property (antifreeze containers, lantern fuel cans, drain cleaner, STP/Heet containers, red chemically stained coffee filters, duct tape, clear glass, containers, lithium batteries, packaging from cold medicines or diet aids)
- _____ The presence of bottles or jugs used extensively for secondary purposes (milk jugs and screw-top beer bottles full of mysterious liquids)
- _____ Windows blacked out or covered by aluminum foil, sheets, blankets, etc.
- _____ Secretive and protective of area surrounding the residence (video cameras, elaborate alarm systems, reinforced doors, electrified fencing)
- _____ In rural area, smaller trailer or building located away from the main house with generator running in the middle of the night.
- _____ Excessive water usage, water lines or electrical cords running to the basement or outbuildings
- _____ Unusual amount of exhaust fan noise, ballast noise or window sweating
- _____ Boxes, bags, or suitcases are often carried in or out of the residence
- _____ Little or no traffic during the day, but lots of traffic at extremely late hours. Different vehicles arriving at the house and staying for only short periods of time. Many of the vehicles may be delivery trucks or vans with out of state plates and U-Hauls.
- _____ Regular visits by people in extremely expensive cars (BMW, Jaguar, Cadillac, etc) to tenants who appear to be significantly impoverished
- _____ A dramatic drop-off of suspected activity within minutes after police have been called, but before they arrive (may indicate usage of a scanner, monitoring police bands)
- _____ Little or no mail, visible trash and no newspaper delivery
- _____ Visitors who appear to be acquaintances rather than friends
- _____ Regular car switching, especially at odd hours – the people arrive in one car, leave it at the premises, and use keys already in their possession to get into another car and drive off

Authorities have found meth labs in closets, vans, motel rooms, trunks of cars and suitcases.