



The Queensland Police Service State Drug Investigation Unit (SDIU) is committed to disrupting the production and distribution of dangerous drugs in Queensland.

The SDIU investigates people involved in the production of dangerous drugs, the diversion of precursor chemicals and scientific apparatus from the legitimate to the illegal market, and the targeting of recidivist offenders.

The number of drug laboratories seized in Queensland has steadily increased over the past 20 years. This is due to information provided by concerned members of the community, effective police detection and QPS awareness campaigns such as *Project CLAWs*.

The Queensland Police Service works closely with other law enforcement agencies to reduce dangerous drugs reaching our streets. Partnerships with government departments and industry stakeholders across Queensland assist us in combating the diversion of precursor chemicals, equipment and drugs.

**For more information on drug labs visit the Queensland Police Service website at [www.police.qld.gov.au](http://www.police.qld.gov.au)**

### Children in drug labs

Apart from the immediate physical dangers of toxic fumes, explosions and fires, research shows children living in premises where clan labs are located can be at a greater risk of abuse and neglect.

Hazardous living conditions are typical of a premises containing a drug lab. Children exposed to these conditions may face contamination or physical injury.

### What can I do?

Providing information is the most important way you can help. The information provided can be treated as confidential. Be aware of the dangers and take action.



## CONTACTS

### Emergency

Call Triple Zero (000) if your life is in danger, there is a serious risk to your property, or a crime is happening now.



### For non-urgent police contact

Call Policelink 131 444 for non-urgent police assistance 24 hours 7 days a week. Alternatively visit or call your local police station.



### Crime Stoppers

Call Crime Stoppers on 1 800 333 000 to provide confidential information anonymously about unsolved crime.

*Produced with assistance from the Community Crime Prevention Fund, Community Safety and Crime Prevention Branch, Queensland Police Service.*



[www.crimestoppers.com.au](http://www.crimestoppers.com.au)  
A Community Volunteer Organisation



**Our Vision is to help make Queensland a safe and secure place to live, visit and do business.**  
**Our Purpose is to deliver quality policing services 24 hours a day.**



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State Drug Investigation Unit, State Crime Operations Command



# DRUG LABS

**Know the risks  
See the signs  
Play your part**



**Clandestine Laboratory Awareness (CLAWs)**



## Use your knowledge

This brochure is designed to inform you about the dangers of drug labs also known as *clandestine laboratories* or “clan labs”.

Drug labs are a major concern. Not only are they the source of dangerous and illicit drugs, but their existence can be extremely hazardous and potentially lethal to members of the community, including children.

The ingredients used to produce illicit drugs are highly toxic, flammable and incredibly dangerous. Drug labs explode, ignite and emit harmful gases that can cause serious health problems and can be life-threatening.

Information supplied to police from the community regarding suspicious activity or the location of drug production equipment or materials can be confidential and can help us locate and safely dismantle these highly unstable and dangerous set-ups.



**THE MOST IMPORTANT THING TO REMEMBER IS NEVER TOUCH ITEMS YOU SUSPECT ARE DRUG RELATED. IF YOU SUSPECT A DRUG LAB IS PRESENT, DO NOT ENTER THE PREMISES. IF ALREADY INSIDE THEN LEAVE IMMEDIATELY AND CONTACT POLICE.**

## What does a drug lab typically look like?

Drug labs are quite often found in residential areas including, rented premises, houses, apartments/units, hotel and motel rooms, garages, rural properties and regional areas and self-storage units.

Most drug labs detected in Queensland are small and therefore highly portable. For this reason, laboratories can also be located inside vehicles including trucks, caravans, boats, trailers and cars.

A drug lab can range from **improvised items including** a few saucepans and glass jars to an elaborate system of laboratory glassware.

Drug labs can also include a pill press, tablet press or encapsulator.

### What do drug labs produce?

Australian drug labs produce a range of illicit drugs including:

- amphetamines and methylamphetamines – commonly referred to as “speed” or “ice” and are highly addictive
- 3,4-Methylenedioxymethamphetamine (MDMA) – street name “ecstasy”
- heroin and “home-bake” heroin
- lysergide (LSD)
- gamma hydroxybutyric acid (GHB) - street name “fantasy”
- paramethoxyamphetamine (PMA)
- other chemically-based dangerous substances.

Drug labs can also include cocaine extractions, synthetic cannabis manufacture and indoor hydroponic cannabis grows. Marijuana grows present risks, ranging from the ingestion of moulds and other harmful substances to the potential for electrocution.

Synthetic drugs are produced using highly toxic chemicals mixed together with other substances. The end product is highly toxic, corrosive, flammable and can present a very real risk of explosion.



## Why are drug labs dangerous?

Drug “cooks” have little regard for themselves or the welfare and safety of the community.

Because of the mix of precursor chemicals and substances used in drug production, drug lab sites have been known to cause explosions, flash burns, fires (including house fires), toxic fumes, poisonous gases, damage to the environment, injury to members of the community and even death.

Exposure to the toxic by-products of these substances can cause immediate harm and can be life threatening. Prolonged exposure to chemicals used in drug labs may contribute to serious long term health issues (including brain, liver and kidney damage and cancer).

The location of drug labs in highly built-up and residential areas is always a concern for law enforcement and other government agencies. The waste produced from drug labs may also cause harm to the environment.

Detecting drug labs is a major priority for police and information from the public is crucial in helping us detect and safely dismantle them.

## What are some of the indicators of a drug lab?

- Items of a suspicious nature including improvised heating and cooling mechanisms
- Other used materials (cold and flu packets, empty pseudoephedrine blister strips, gas cylinders or butane fuel cans, stained coffee filters, pH testers or test strips, water pumps) surrounding a property
- An unusual chemical smell
- Plastic containers (with or without chemical labels) at the premises
- Laboratory glassware being carried into a premises or present at a premises
- Fan or pump type noise coming from the premises
- Residents never putting their rubbish out or burning their rubbish
- Little or no traffic at a residence during the day, but frequent traffic late at night or at odd hours
- Windows blackened out or extra effort to ensure windows and doors are covered or reinforced
- Evidence of unusual electrical work surrounding the premises
- Noticeable hoses and pipes near windows or doors
- Installation of extractor fans (especially in garages/sheds)
- Recently rented premises where residents are rarely there
- A new tenant willing to pay rent months in advance, using only cash
- New rental applicants who try to avoid background checks
- Chemical/reaction waste (often carelessly disposed of).