

# WAYNE COUNTY FIRE DEPARTMENT STANDARD OPERATING GUIDELINE

NUMBER: SOG 1

DATE: December 12, 2012

SUBJECT: Emergency Methamphetamine Laboratory Response

## PURPOSE:

The purpose of this SOG is to enable the Wayne County Fire Departments and their personnel to understand their role when working with the local Police Department, Wayne County Sheriff's Department, or other area Law Enforcement agencies at the scene of a Meth Lab. In addition, this SOG is also intended to provide guidance to members who randomly discover a Meth Lab during the course of their duties.

## DEFINITION:

A Methamphetamine Lab (clandestine lab) is defined as an illegal and covert operation used for the production of drugs, explosives, and/or biological and chemical weapons or other materials of concern to a responder's health and safety.

## RECOGNIZING A METH LAB:

A methamphetamine laboratory may be identified by the presence of beakers, test tubes, jars, propane tanks, stored chemicals, strong chemical odors, etc. **A methamphetamine lab can be a severe fire and/or explosion hazard as well as a Hazardous Material threat. A meth lab is a crime scene and requires the response of both the local Fire Department and the Law Enforcement Agency having jurisdiction.**

## PRIMARY HAZARDS:

- Extremes of pH
- Over pressurization (if the vessel is not burped)
- Reactive metals (lithium will react violently with water and produce hydrogen gas)
- Flammable liquids (ether is extremely flammable)
- Toxic vapors (ammonia and hydrogen gas)

**NOTE:** The reaction vessel may spontaneously combust at any stage of the reaction. Do not approach the reaction vessel without proper PPE and remain cautious throughout the entire process.

## RESPONSE GUIDELINES:

- A. Law Enforcement request for a Fire Department response:** Law Enforcement shall call in an Emergency Meth Lab Response and request the local Fire Department for assistance. The responding Law Enforcement Agency may not disclose the exact incident location unless Law Enforcement personnel are already on scene and have secured the area. A staging location may be utilized for Fire and Law Enforcement personnel to meet.
- The following non-emergency response unless otherwise directed or requested to the designated incident location.
    - 1) OIC
    - 2) Engine
    - 3) Heavy Rescue (if dept. has or uses)
    - 4) Medic Unit
    - 5) County Haz-Mat Team (should be thinking of this if needed)
    - 6) Air Unit

**B. Scene Operations:** FD personnel shall report to the responding Law Enforcement Agency. FD is in support of Law Enforcement operations at the scene of a Meth Lab. The following outlines the standard scene operations.

- 1) Do not enter areas of concern, do not tamper with or alter potential evidence.
- 2) Remain with assigned apparatus until Law Enforcement feels the incident is under control.
- 3) Engine and/or Rescue shall be prepared to decontaminate the Law Enforcement teams that may enter the area (utilization of the county decon team should be considered)

If Law Enforcement informs the OIC that the incident is an active meth lab or conditions exist that indicate a significant product release, fire threat is imminent, or a rescue needs to take place the following actions should be taken.

- 1) OIC shall establish unified command with Law Enforcement.
- 2) A hose line should be charged and ready for immediate use.
- 3) OIC should consider requesting the response of a Hazardous Materials Team.
- 4) Full turnout gear with use of SCBA shall be worn if in the hazard area.
- 5) Operations should be limited to only those that are needed to stabilize the incident and then withdraw and reassess in accordance with standard Hazardous Materials operations.
- 6) Law Enforcement will coordinate tear down, removal and securing of evidence. The Haz Mat specialist will provide assistance as needed.

**C. Discovery of a suspected Meth Lab during ordinary response or duties of a Fire Department or their personal:**

Should FD personnel discover a suspected Meth Lab in the course of their normal duties, personnel safety shall be considered the highest priority.

- 1) Be aware of respiratory hazards and contact hazards that could potentially exist in these labs. Immediately don the highest level of personal and respiratory protection on hand and withdraw from the area quickly if there is not a life hazard, with as little disturbance as possible to the immediate area.
- 2) Contact dispatch and notify them of the situation and request the appropriate Law Enforcement Agency response.
- 3) Set up perimeter zones until the arrival of Law Enforcement.
- 4) Address imminent health concerns of all personnel exposed.
- 5) Consider evacuation of civilians in the immediate area as necessary.
- 6) Consider emergency decon procedures if needed.
- 7) If a fire or other release has occurred, limit fire suppression or other operations to a minimum until the health risks are assessed and Haz Mat related issues are addressed.
- 8) Upon arrival of Law Enforcement, follow the scene operations outlined above.

**D. Additional items that maybe requested by Law Enforcement:**

- 1) Additional SCBA tanks or an air truck be provided to fill air bottles in the event the size of the meth Lab dictates remaining in SCBA's for dismantling/processing

