



# CLEVELAND DIVISION OF POLICE

## GENERAL POLICE ORDER



EFFECTIVE DATE: <b>NOVEMBER 30, 2020</b>	CHAPTER: <b>5 - Field Investigations</b>	PAGE: <b>1 of 4</b>	NUMBER: <b>5.09.01</b>
SUBJECT: <b style="text-align: center;">CLANDESTINE LABORATORIES</b>			
CHIEF: <b style="text-align: center;"><i>Calvin D. Williams, Chief</i></b>			

*Substantive changes are italicized*

**PURPOSE:** To establish guidelines to manage incidents involving a clandestine laboratory where volatile chemicals and/or illicit drugs are or may be grown or manufactured.

**POLICY:** **It is the policy of the Cleveland Division of Police** to use extreme caution when a clandestine laboratory is discovered due to the potential hazards of bodily harm and property damage. Only qualified hazmat and Bomb Squad technicians shall handle suspected chemicals or volatile substances. Under no circumstances is a clandestine drug laboratory to be transported to the Crime Scene and Record Unit Forensic Laboratory.

**DEFINITIONS:**

**Clandestine Laboratory** - any location, particularly an enclosed space used for the production of marijuana, methamphetamine, or other dangerous narcotic/controlled substances where the manufacture or growth of the narcotic is a hazard to human health. A clandestine laboratory also includes any building, site, or vehicle where explosives, including fireworks or chemical/biological weapons are manufactured.

**Clandestine Laboratory Identifiers** – a large presence of flasks, beakers, test tubes, filters, jars, funnels, rubber gloves, propane tanks, as well as drug recipes and cooking information, and strong chemical odors. Ordinary household and consumer product items such as pots and pans, coffee pots, and two-liter bottles may be used as vessels in the manufacture of narcotics. Chemicals to look for include:

- Pseudoephedrine (cold tablets and nasal decongestants)
- Reagent chemicals (red phosphorus, iodine crystals, iodine tincture)
- Solvents (acetone, denatured alcohol, ether, lighter fluid, methanol)
- Other chemicals (antifreeze, lye, muriatic and sulfuric acids)

**PROCEDURES:**

I. Officer Responsibilities

A. Officers investigating a possible clandestine laboratory shall:

1. Use extreme caution and treat the scene as if it were a bomb scene.
2. Not use radio transmissions within 300 feet of any suspected hazardous, explosive, volatile substances.
3. Not smoke or cause an open flame or spark at or near the premises.

4. Be mindful of the potential of creating static electricity either by contact with carpeted surfaces or the wearing of woolen articles of clothing such as sweaters or scarves.
5. Not turn on light switches (flashlights are permitted) or other electrical apparatus in the area. Only the Bomb Squad and hazmat technicians are qualified to do so.
6. Notify the Communications Control Section (CCS) to contact a supervisor to respond to the scene if one is not already there. If the officer's responding supervisor is assigned to a unit other than a district unit, a sector supervisor shall also be dispatched to the scene to receive a full briefing. The unit or supervisor assigned to the investigatory responsibility of the scene shall be responsible for the scene.
7. Evacuate the scene to a perimeter of 300 feet, the same as if live explosives are involved.
8. Consult with *the sector/unit supervisor and the Bomb Squad Officer-in-Charge (OIC)* and assess the need for evacuation.
9. Forward all incident and investigative reports involving clandestine laboratory drug manufacturing/growing to the Narcotics Unit OIC within seven days of the incident.
10. For clandestine laboratories suspected of being used in the manufacture of chemical, biological, or explosive weapons shall require CCS to notify *the Bomb Squad and the Intelligence Unit OICs*.

## II. Supervisor Responsibilities

### A. *On scene* supervisors investigating a possible clandestine laboratory shall:

1. Contact the Bomb Squad OIC through CCS. The OIC will determine the level of response to the scene.
2. *Prior to Bomb Squad's arrival*, request through CCS that the Cleveland Division of Fire dispatch the appropriate apparatus to standby at the scene.
3. Consult with the Cleveland Division of Fire (CDF) supervisor *and Bomb Squad OIC* to ensure directives relative to any need for evacuation are followed.
4. If it is believed that any children may have been exposed to the hazardous environment, ensure that the Department of Children and Family Services is notified. If circumstances warrant, the supervisor shall ensure that an Endangering Children report is completed and call EMS for medical attention for the children.

5. If the investigation reveals a viable clandestine laboratory, request that the appropriate district Vice Unit OIC respond to the scene to handle the follow-up investigation and charging.

### III. Narcotics Unit/District Vice Unit OIC Responsibilities

- A. When a suspected clandestine laboratory is the subject of a tactical entry, with a search warrant (or when exigent circumstances exist, without a warrant), the OIC of the Narcotics Unit or District Vice Unit shall:
  1. Contact the SWAT Unit OIC who will arrange a tactical entry by a SWAT Team that is trained and equipped to handle a potential hazmat situation.
  2. For de-confliction purposes, contact the OIC of the District Vice Unit or Narcotics Unit at least 48 hours prior to executing a clandestine laboratory entry.
  3. Ensure that all the necessary arrangements are made, including:
    - a. Trash pulls on suspected clandestine laboratory sites shall be conducted in concert with the OIC of the Bomb Squad. The Bomb Squad OIC shall direct and maintain discretion to have bomb technicians assist in the proper handling of seized hazmat evidence.
    - b. Pre-entry briefing with the Bomb Squad. The Bomb Squad shall standby at the scene while the hazmat SWAT team clears the location of suspects. The Bomb Squad will then conduct the evidence search. When available, a SWAT Tactical Emergency Medical Paramedic will attend the briefing and coordinate with CDF on scene.
    - c. Contacting CDF to have appropriate equipment including a Fire Rescue Squad with hazmat rescue capabilities on scene at the entry time.

### IV. Bomb Squad Responsibilities

- A. When notified of a suspected clandestine laboratory the Bomb Squad shall:
  1. Respond to the scene.
  2. Be responsible for searching the site after a warrant is obtained by the investigating Division entity.
  3. Handle, remove, preserve, or order evidence destroyed per established unit protocols.
  4. *Dispose of hazardous materials from clandestine laboratories through the current Bureau of Criminal Investigation (BCI) practices and procedures container program. Transport in properly marked, approved containers to approved storage sites within 24 hours.*

- B. Where well-articulated exigent circumstances exist indicating an immediate risk of serious physical harm to officers or the community, the Bomb Squad may conduct a search for hazardous materials without a search warrant (e.g., strong odors of caustic chemicals emanating from the suspect address putting officers and citizens at risk; evacuation is either not recommended for safety reasons or would overwhelm the personnel resources available; armed suspect barricaded in an area where volatile, hazardous chemical substances are suspected to be present).

V. Narcotics Unit Responsibilities

- A. When receiving incident and investigative reports involving clandestine laboratory drug manufacturing/growing, the Narcotics Unit OIC or designee shall ensure that all notifications are made, including:
  - 1. The Ohio Attorney General's Office BCI.
  - 2. The El Paso Intelligence Center (EPIC).
  - 3. The Real Time Crime Center (RTCC).

VI. Investigative Responsibilities

- A. District Vice Units shall be responsible for the follow up investigation of viable clandestine laboratories used for the manufacture of fireworks.
- B. At the direction of the Chief of Police, Deputy Chief of Homeland Special Operations, or the Commander of Special Services the Narcotics Unit may assume all or part of a clandestine laboratory investigation.

**THIS ORDER SUPERSEDES ANY PREVIOUSLY ISSUED DIRECTIVE OR POLICY FOR THIS SUBJECT AND WILL REMAIN EFFECTIVE UNTIL RESCINDED OR SUPERSEDED.**