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Iowa State University's Center for Transportation Research and Education (CTRE) is the umbrella organization for the following centers and programs:

- Bridge Engineering Center
- Center for Weather Impacts on Mobility and Safety
- Construction Management & Technology
- Iowa Local Technical Assistance Program
- Iowa Statewide Urban Design and Specifications
- Iowa Traffic Safety Data Service
- Midwest Transportation Consortium
- National Concrete Pavement Technology Center
- Partnership for Geotechnical Advancement
- Roadway Infrastructure Management & Operations Systems
- Traffic Safety and Operations



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Still a deadly danger for road workers

In 2004, Iowa was second only to Missouri in the number of methamphetamine lab incidents each year.

In May 2005, Iowa began controlling the sale of nonprescription cold and allergy products containing pseudoephedrine (PSE). PSE is a key ingredient used to manufacture the narcotic methamphetamine, also called crystal, ice, crank, glass, or just meth.

As a result of this and other control and educational efforts, by the end of 2005 Iowa was leading the country in the reduction of meth labs. The number of labs found in the state has dropped by almost 80 percent.

But roadway workers should continue to be on the lookout for deadly lab waste dumps.

Dangerous materials

For every meth lab found, several other labs may exist that are not discovered.

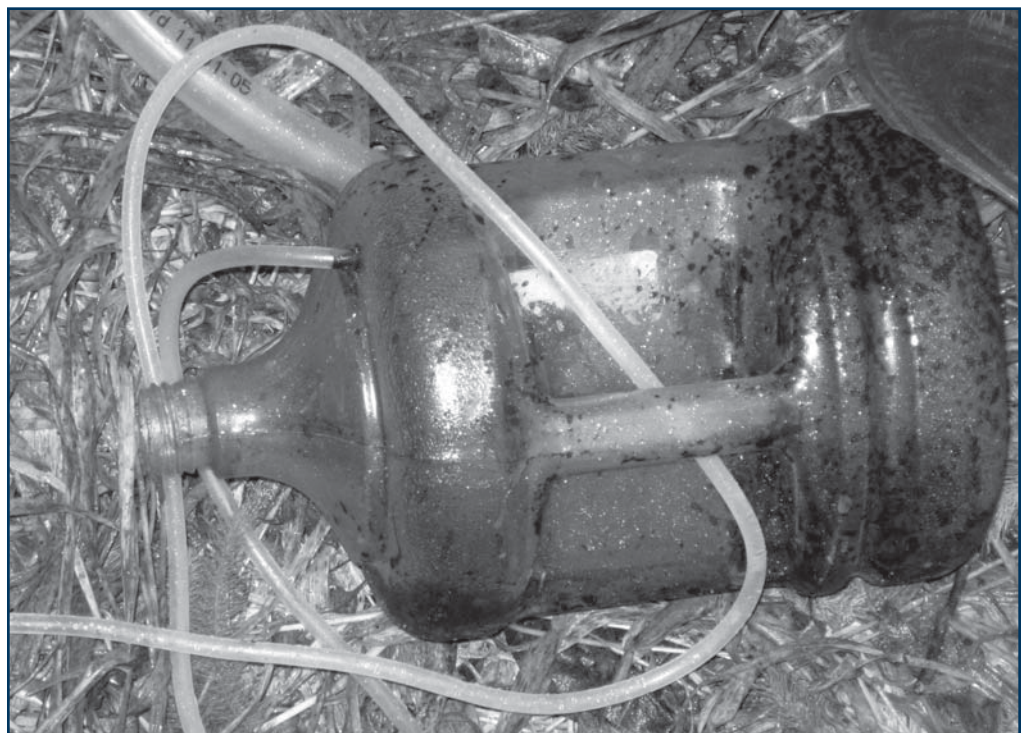
Manufacturing one pound of meth generates six pounds of toxic waste. The waste is often dumped in isolated rural areas, road ditches, and fields. It is extremely dangerous—even lethal—and requires special handling by trained hazardous materials personnel.

The waste materials are highly flammable, explosive, and/or corrosive. Disturbing them often re-starts chemical reactions that can cause sudden explosions.

Coming in contact with these materials can cause headache, nausea, dizziness, or skin or eye irritation. Inhaling the fumes can cause acute lung damage. An unexpected explosion can result in severe chemical burns.

The materials themselves are bad enough (see the sidebar on page 3). In addition, illegal meth manufacturers have been known to booby-trap meth labs and waste dumps.

Meth danger continued on page 3



Waste dump from an illegal methamphetamine lab. Photo courtesy of the Central Iowa Drug Task Force.

Meth danger continued from cover

Road workers at risk

Like hunters and Adopt-a-Highway volunteers, road workers are among those likely to stumble upon a meth waste dump.

- Be alert. What may look like some harmless trash in a ditch may be lethal meth waste material.
- Do not go near the material(s).
- Do not touch or move anything in the area. (In addition to being dangerous to yourself, disturbing the area may hinder law enforcement agencies' efforts to trace the lab location and/or the manufacturers.)
- Contact your supervisor immediately. Your supervisor should contact law enforcement personnel with the exact location of the possible meth waste dump.

For more information

Watch a 10-minute video, *Meth Lab Waste Recognition for Adopt-a-Highway Volunteers*, available through the Iowa LTAP library. Librarian Jim Hogan says, "Every road worker should see this video before doing any outdoor work." Contact Jim, 515-294-9481, hoganj@iastate.edu.

Read *The Impact of Senate File 169 on Meth Abuse in Iowa*, a January 17, 2006, report to the legislature by Drug Policy Coordinator Marvin Van Haaften. It is available on the Governor's Office of Drug Control Policy website, www.state.ia.us/odcp/docs/SF169Leg.pdf. ■

Crystal meth use on the rise

Illegal methamphetamine labs may be on the decline in Iowa, but the demand for meth is not. An increasing amount of meth, especially crystal meth or ice, is illegally flowing into Iowa from Mexico and the southwest United States.

Ice is purer than the powdered meth produced by most local manufacturers. The purer form is more addictive and physically destructive.

Purchasing imported meth is more expensive than manufacturing it locally. Some communities are reporting increases in burglaries that may be attributable to the increased costs of meth.

Meth waste: what to watch for

There are several methods for manufacturing methamphetamine. Each method involves slightly different materials and equipment that may be dumped.

Be suspicious if you come across the following:

- Anything that could be used as a waste receptacle: a plastic garbage bag, backpack, duffel bag, cooler (even the trunk of a car)
- A patch of dead grass or dying vegetation, which could signal the presence of polluting materials
- A strong smell of cat urine, rotten eggs, or ammonia

A combination of any of these items:

- empty blister packs or boxes of cold or allergy pills containing ephedrine or PSE (Sudafed®, Contac® Non-Drowsy, or generic versions of these)
- aluminum foil
- blenders
- buckets
- butane torches
- cheesecloth, coffee filters, funnels
- duct tape, clamps
- gas cans
- glass jars, flasks, bottles, dishes
- hot plates or camp stoves
- paper towels
- plastic cartons
- propane, portable propane tanks
- rubber gloves
- rubber or plastic tubing
- strainers
- syringes
- thermometers
- thermoses

Any of the following chemicals:

- acetone
- anhydrous ammonia
- car batteries
- cat litter (may be in a bag or container with a plastic hose, called a "death bag")
- charcoal lighter fluid
- denatured alcohol
- drain cleaner (sulfuric acid)
- epsom salt or salt
- freon
- HEET gasoline additive
- iodine
- isopropyl or rubbing alcohol
- kerosene
- lacquer
- lithium batteries
- match books for washed-off striker strips
- matches for red phosphorus
- mineral spirits
- muriatic acid
- paint thinner (toluene)
- Red Devil lye
- starting fluid (ether)
- trichloroethane (a common gun-cleaning solvent)