AFP | Governance

ACT Policing: Practical Guide: Illicit Clandestine Drug Laboratories (Clanlabs)

1. Disclosure and compliance

This document is classified **UNCLASSIFIED** and is intended for internal AFP use.

Disclosing any content must comply with Commonwealth law and the AFP National Guideline on disclosure of information.

Compliance

This instrument is part of the AFP's professional standards framework. The AFP Commissioner's Order on Professional Standards (CO2) outlines the expectations for appointees to adhere to the requirements of the framework. Inappropriate departures from the provisions of this instrument may constitute a breach of AFP professional standards and be dealt with under Part V of the *Australian Federal Police Act 1979* (Cth).

Under Review

2. Introduction

2.1 This practical guide outlines police response to be made in respect of planning investigations into, or accidental discovery of an illicit Clandestine Drug Laboratory ("Clanlab").

2.2 Clandestine Drug Laboratories, by the very nature of their activities pose significant hazards and risks to law enforcement and support agencies.

2.3 A Clandestine Drug Laboratory is defined as an illicit operation consisting of apparatus and chemicals that either has been, or can be used to manufacture illicit drugs or substances listed under the Drugs Of Dependence Act 1989. Such operations are potentially hazardous to the offender, neighbours, investigators, responding agencies, and the environment. The degree of hazard depends upon their specific site, the chemicals present, conditions of storage (sealed, open or leaking containers) and proximity to each other (the combination of which may lead to various violent chemical reactions).

2.4 A priority of the Australian Federal Police is to ensure that occupational health and safety standards are adhered to at Clandestine Drug Laboratory sites.

2.5 This practical guide equally applies to suspected or actual Clandestine Drug Laboratories. If a member has a suspicion that equipment and chemicals discovered are these of a Clandestine Drug Laboratory, the scene is to be treated as a Clandestine Drug Laboratory.

3. General Safety

3.1 Regardless of circumstances in which a member encounters a Clandestine Drug Laboratory, the following steps will be adhered to members:

i. s37(2)(b)
ii. will not attempt to switch off, dismantle, disconnect or deactivate any item;
iii. will not touch, move or handle any item;
iv. will isolate the scene and maintain a safety perimeter;
v. will preserve the scene;
vi. will ensure that no smoking is observed within safety perimeter area; and
vii. will immediately notify police Communications.

3.2 Entry to a Clandestine Drug Laboratory is to be made only by members of the ACT Clandestine Laboratory Team who have qualified at an approved Clandestine Drug Laboratory course.

4. Accidental Discovery

4.1 In the case of accidental discovery of a Clandestine Drug Laboratory during routine police duties, members are to ensure that safety procedures outlined in 2.1 are adhered to. Additionally, members are to ensure that no person enters the site once the perimeter is maintained. Members are to be aware that their accidental entry into a Clandestine Drug laboratory may have resulted in chemical contamination from the site and that they will require decontamination procedures. Prior to this occurring, members are to limit contact with other persons and are not to utilise police vehicles.

5. Planned Investigations

5.1 Any member tasked with the investigation of a Clandestine Drug Laboratory shall, at the earliest opportunity notify the s37(2)(b), s47E(d) is tasked with the provision of information and monitoring of intelligence relevant to the investigations of Clandestine Drug Laboratories. It is the responsibility of the s37(2)(b), s47E(d) to coordinate assistance from members of the ACT Clandestine Laboratory Team to the investigator in the planning stage of an investigation.

5.2 Members of the ACT Clandestine Laboratory Team must be consulted prior to commencement of investigations in respect of Clandestine Drug Laboratories. For the purpose of this section, Clandestine Drug Laboratory means actual or suspected.

5.3 Under no circumstances shall an investigating member plan or execute an entry to a Clandestine Drug laboratory without first consulting with a member of the ACT Clandestine Laboratory Team.

6. Notification and Attendance

6.1 Where an accidental discovery of a Clandestine Drug Laboratory is made, or where such a Laboratory is reported to be located, the following steps will be adhered to:

i. Police Communications to be notified;
ii. Duty Superintendent to be notified if after hours;

Under Review

iii. Team leader of ACT Clandestine Laboratory Team to be notified; and
iv. Call out of Team as required.
v. Notify support agencies, for example ACT Ambulance, HAZMAT as directed by the Team Leader of the Clandestine Laboratory Team.

6.2 The ACT Clandestine Laboratory Team will attend at all Clandestine Drug Laboratory related incidents. These include the location of stored and unused chemicals believed or suspected to be used for the purpose of manufacturing illicit drugs, as well as suspected or actual Laboratory sites.

6.3 The call out of the ACT Clandestine Laboratory Team may be authorised by any Commissioned Officer where concern exists as to the safety of police personnel or the general public.

7. ACT Clandestine Drug Laboratory Team

7.1 The ACT Clandestine Drug Laboratory Team will consist of members who have undertaken and qualified at an approved course of training, having current qualifications in the use of breathing apparatus equipment and personal protective equipment applicable to Clandestine Drug Laboratory processing. The Team is to consist of:

i.
ii.
iii.
iv. s37(2)(b)
v.
vi.

7.2 The Team Leader / Site Control Officer will have full responsibility for the control and coordination of any suspected or actual Clandestine Drug Laboratory incident, and will maintain full control over an incident so as to ensure the safety of all personnel, and the general public. The Team Leader/Site Control Officer will also have the responsibility for the coordination of support agencies.

8. Assistance from Support Services

8.1 The Clandestine Laboratory Team will receive assistance from Forensic Chemists from the ACT Australian Government Analytical Laboratories (AGAL), and from designated members of the ACT Emergency Services Bureau. Regardless of services and equipment provided, the Site Control Officer will maintain control and responsibility over the scene. Any such scene will be treated as a Crime Scene at all times.

8.2 Only designated members of ACT AGAL and the ACT ESB who have completed appropriate courses of training in Clandestine Drug Laboratory investigations and site processing are to enter any suspected Clandestine Drug Laboratory. These entries are to be only made on the approval of the Site Control Officer, and are to be made only to assist in the identification of substances, and to aid in the safe processing and disposal of the Laboratory site.

9. Equipment

Under Review

9.1 The AFP will ensure that the ACT Clandestine Drug Laboratory Team has access to appropriate clothing and equipment to allow for the effective performance of its duties.

9.2 The provision of specialist equipment and personal protective equipment will be provided and maintained by the ACT Emergency Services Bureau. This equipment will be provided as required to members of the Team.

10. Forced Entries

10.1 Forced entries into Clandestine Laboratory sites are to be avoided under ordinary circumstances. In the event that entry is deemed necessary, the investigating or planning member will consult with a member of the ACT Clandestine Drug Laboratory Team. This consultation will also be undertaken by the Coordinator, Special Operations Team (SOT) with members of the ACT Clandestine Laboratory Team prior to any considered forced entry by SOT.

s47E(d)

Under Review