



NEW ZEALAND

# NATIONAL DRUG INTELLIGENCE BUREAU

JOINT OPERATION OF CUSTOMS, HEALTH & POLICE

25 November 2020

**Subject:** OIA – Clandestine Laboratory Procedures

REF: IR-01-20-33758

**Attention:** Bryan Stralow

Dear Bryan,

Thank you for your Official Information Act request transferred to the National Drug Intelligence Bureau (NDIB) on 9 November 2020.

Specifically you requested the following:

- “1) In response to Police being informed as to a suspected Methamphetamine Clandestine Laboratory operating nearby, could you please provide your standard operational procedure when responding to being notified of this.*
- 2) In response to a public area being exposed to potentially harmful gases, could you please forward your standard operational procedure taken to protect the greater public from such a potential health threat.*
- 3) In response to Police being notified of an incident surrounding inadvertent exposure of minors to the by products from the manufacture of Methamphetamines, could you please provide your standard operational procedure in order to protect and ensure the health of the minor affected.*

Please find the response supplied by the National Clandestine Laboratory Response Team (NCLRT):

- 1) In response to Police being informed as to a suspected Methamphetamine Clandestine Laboratory operating nearby, could you please provide your standard operational procedure when responding to being notified of this.*

### 8.3.2 Planned Entry

Illicit drug-manufacturing laboratories pose multiple health and safety concerns. At all clandestine laboratory scenes, safety considerations must always outweigh evidentiary considerations. Planning an entry to a Clandestine Laboratory will reduce the risks. The manner of entry will depend on the nature of the intelligence on such factors as:

- Whether it is an active or inactive laboratory;
- The number and nature of offenders or others present in the



NEW ZEALAND

# NATIONAL DRUG INTELLIGENCE BUREAU

JOINT OPERATION OF CUSTOMS, HEALTH & POLICE

---

laboratory;

- The laboratory location;
- Proximity to persons or property;
- Type / size of Laboratory ;
- Firearms / weapons / booby traps.

### 8.3.3 Initial Entry Team (IET)

The decision to deploy an IET should only be made once other options have been assessed. Where possible the apprehension of offenders should take place outside the Clandestine Laboratory or wait until such time as the laboratory is known to be inactive. When a site is unoccupied the risks can be greatly reduced.

Where entry is not carried out by AOS / STG, the IET can only be sworn officers who have completed the Clandestine Laboratory Investigators Course and who are currently 'clan lab' qualified. This is a limited district resource and unlikely to be an option without adequate notice and planning. These staff are NOT trained or equipped for tactical entries. They do possess suitable levels of protective clothing ([Refer "PPE & SAFETY EQUIPMENT" on page 14](#)) and are trained in clandestine laboratory specific hazard identification, initial action, emergency first aid and emergency decontamination procedures.

### 8.3.4 AOS / STG

As Clandestine Laboratory scenes are in themselves hazardous environments there are inherent dangers and the potential for accidents. The compounding risk added by the presence of offenders requires a carefully managed response by trained and resourced staff. In cases where the pre search warrant risk assessment identifies 'clandestine laboratory' as a risk factor the AOS / STG are to be briefed and given the opportunity to effect entry and apprehend offenders.

In cases where:

- the clandestine laboratory is believed to be active and/or occupied or;
- where armed offenders (any weapon) are believed or suspected to be present or;
- firearms are likely to be present;

the use of the Special Tactics Group / Armed Offenders Squad is mandatory. These groups have their own operating procedures, have suitable PPE and have received a level of training in the field of Clandestine Laboratories.



NEW ZEALAND

# NATIONAL DRUG INTELLIGENCE BUREAU

JOINT OPERATION OF CUSTOMS, HEALTH & POLICE

## 8.3.5 IET - Minimum level of Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)

The Minimum level of PPE for IET members is:

- Flame retardant overalls;
- Chemical & Flame resistant coveralls;
- Boots;
- Fire resistant gloves;
- Balaclava;
- Police SRBA vests;
- APR's with Air filters. (CF32A2B2E2K2-P3)

This compromise (from level 'B' personal protection equipment, [Refer "Level B \(unknown hazards\)" on page 14](#)) allows for mobility while providing some protection.

When preparing for an entry always consider:

- Limitations on the level of protection used by IET;
- Offenders being armed / drug affected ;  
[Refer "The Presence of Armed and/or Drug Affected Persons" on page 16](#)
- Security measures / booby traps;
- Potential for slip / trip / fall incidents;
- Toxic gases and fumes;
- Corrosive chemicals;
- Explosion / fire.

In all cases pre entry briefings should include:

- Safety issues;
- Offender ratios and the '90 second rule';  
[Refer "90 Second Rule" on page 27](#)  
[Refer "Recommended Police to Offender Ratio 22" on page 27](#)
- Accident / exposure procedures;
- Decontamination procedures;
- Intelligence regarding the offenders;
- Specific chemical dangers presented by the laboratory;
- Minimum levels of PPE;
- First Aid provisions (i.e. ambulance / first aid kits );
- A "Landslide" contingency plan with stated and clearly identified rendezvous point (R.V.)



NEW ZEALAND

# NATIONAL DRUG INTELLIGENCE BUREAU

JOINT OPERATION OF CUSTOMS, HEALTH & POLICE

*Refer "Landslides" on page 27.*

- Emergency evacuation plan

The IET should at all times be supported by a Rescue Team (minimum of two trained staff in a higher level of PPE) until such time as the Officer in Charge of the IET is satisfied that all hazards have been managed and the site is safe for processing.

The IET will secure the scene and immediately remove persons to the decontamination area. They should stay in the scene no longer than is absolutely necessary.

When entering a Clandestine Laboratory the immediate priority for the IET should be:

- Ensuring their own safety;
- Protecting other team members;
- Removing offenders from the laboratory;
- Protecting the community and environment.

*(2) In response to a public area being exposed to potentially harmful gases, could you please forward your standard operational procedure taken to protect the greater public from such a potential health threat.*

NZ Fire and Emergency would likely be the lead agency should this scenario be reported. Any information relating to their standard operating procedures would need to be requested from them.

*(3) In response to Police being notified of an incident surrounding inadvertent exposure of minors to the by-products from the manufacture of Methamphetamines, could you please provide your standard operational procedure in order to protect and ensure the health of the minor affected.*

There is no standard operational procedure for this scenario. However, should this situation present, it is likely we would advise the guardian of the child to have the child medically checked by a doctor and engage the services of an independent drug testing agency for the purpose of ascertaining the extent of any potential contamination so the appropriate health treatment can be provided. Police would also consider notifying other relevant government agencies to ensure the safety of the child.



NEW ZEALAND

# NATIONAL DRUG INTELLIGENCE BUREAU

JOINT OPERATION OF CUSTOMS, HEALTH & POLICE

If you are not satisfied with my response to your request, you have the right under section 28(3) of the Official Information Act 1982 to ask the Office of the Ombudsman to review my decision.

Yours sincerely

**Detective Inspector Blair Macdonald**

Manager | National Drug Intelligence Bureau

Police National Headquarters, 180 Molesworth Street, PO Box 3017, Wellington 6011

*Joint Operation of Customs, Health & Police*

