

Beware of Meth Lab Waste



99% of all meth in Northern Michigan is made using the "one pot" method, making it one of the most dangerous items to come across while performing shoreline or streambank cleanups.

By knowing what to look for, you can prevent accidental explosions and burns.

What is meth?

Methamphetamine, or meth, is a highly toxic, powerful central nervous system stimulant with a potential to become an addictive drug. Some of its street names include crank, crystal, speed, chalk, glass, and ice. It can be smoked, snorted, injected, or ingested. Manufacturing, distributing, or possessing meth is illegal.

Why is the Watershed Council concerned?

An illegal drug lab can be set up using common household equipment and chemicals. The different ways of making meth can involve explosives, solvents, metals, salts, and corrosives. Meth labs have been found in homes, sheds, motel and hotel rooms, in car trunks, outside in the woods, and along our rivers. Manufacturing or "cooking" meth can leave behind large amounts of toxic waste that can be extremely dangerous for the environment and people who are unaware of how to spot a potential meth lab.

Of the most concern to Watershed Council is the use of the "one pot" meth manufacturing process which makes it easy for people to "cook" meth in quiet secluded areas outdoors such as in the woods, and along roadsides, and our lake and river shorelines. Hazardous waste from this method of meth manufacturing process has been found along local streams making it a concern for the safety of our volunteers.

What are the dangers of meth lab waste?

The chemical mixture in a "one pot" container, usually a pop bottle or sports drink bottle, could burst into flames when exposed to oxygen, making it extremely dangerous for anyone who might unscrew the lid. The chemical cocktail contained inside can potentially cause life threatening third-degree burns or even death.



Simply picking up or prodding a container that contains waste from meth manufacturing could remix the contents causing the bottle to burst into flames or fail, splattering the toxic chemicals onto the person holding the container or those near by. People picking up litter during roadside and river cleanups have been injured from meth lab waste.

Exposures to the high levels of contaminants used in meth manufacturing can cause shortness of breath, coughing, chest pain, dizziness, lack of coordination, chemical irritation, and burns to the skin, eyes, mouth and nose, and in severe cases, death.

Safety First

The safety of our volunteers and our community is extremely important. On the back of this flyer you will find a list of items commonly used in meth production. Knowing what to watch for and what to do if you suspect you have found meth lab waste will help keep you safe and protect others.



Meth lab waste in Indiana River.

COMMONLY FOUND METH LAB WASTE

MAY INCLUDE THE FOLLOWING CHEMICALS, EQUIPMENT, OR PACKAGING

This information is provided by Tip of the Mitt Watershed Council and Petoskey Department of Public Safety. For more information on this topic, contact your local law enforcement agency.



Flammable solvents: starting fluids, Coleman Fuel, camping fuel, paint thinner, etc.



Any container with "bi level" liquids



Large quantities of glass and plastic containers, buckets, plastic hose



Loose pills or packaging from pills that contain ephedrine or pseudoephedrine



Any containers with plastic tubing or hoses



Quantities of coffee filters or paper towels with unusual stains



Lye ("Red Devil"), Crystal Drano, or other drain cleaners



Disassembled lithium batteries



Containers such as muriatic acid, iodine, or hydrogen peroxide



Cold packs containing ammonium nitrate



Trash bags with an ether, solvent, or ammonia odor



Table or rock salt

Finding any of these items clustered together could be an indication of meth lab waste. If you find any of the items above or similar products, **DO NOT touch, smell, or examine them.**



Image courtesy of Cadillac News

Meth dump site discovered in Wexford County, MI

WHAT TO DO

when you suspect you have found meth lab waste?

DO NOT INVESTIGATE. Prodding the material could further endanger you or others in the area.

IMMEDIATELY CALL 9-1-1 to notify local police of your suspicions.

If you must leave the area, **mark the site** with a trash bag, tape, or other indicator tied to a tree so authorities can find the site.