Supplemental to DCS Policy: 14.5 Child Protective Services Planning, Locating Child-Family and Notification to External Agencies

Web link to Tennessee Alliance for Drug Endangered Children: [http://www.rid-meth.org/TADEC.html](http://www.rid-meth.org/TADEC.html)

| A. Request for Law Enforcement assistance | 1. When a referral is initially received by DCS alleging a report of a clandestine lab (Definition of Clandestine: A methamphetamine lab is sometimes referred to as a clandestine laboratory by law enforcement officials. The more common street name is, “mom and pop” labs. The primary purpose of these labs is to manufacture illegal controlled substances such as methamphetamine. These labs pose a variety of hazards to the environment and most importantly to people. The case worker must contact local law enforcement immediately to request assistance.

2. The case worker must coordinate the DCS investigation with law enforcement and respond as quickly as possible to the designated location and follow response Priority 1 guidelines as outlined in DCS Policy 14.3, Screening, Priority Response and Assignment of Child Protective Services Cases. |
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| B. When it is Confirmed that a clandestine lab has been found | 1. When a case worker responds to the lab site, remain in a safe location outside of any established perimeter until otherwise advised by law enforcement that it is safe to proceed.

2. **DCS case workers will not enter a residence where the manufacturing of methamphetamine has been confirmed.**

3. When clearance is given by law enforcement, the case worker assesses and interviews the children.

4. The case worker must immediately contact the CPS Supervisor and legal staff to seek a legal remedy to protect the child.

5. When assessing the home environment, ask the investigating officer to look for excessive quantities or a combination of the following items commonly found in a drug laboratory which are often located in areas of the house or garage accessible to children:

- Funnels, flasks, plastic tubing, large plastic containers, beakers
♦ Drano, iodine crystals, Red Devil lye, acids, anhydrous ammonia, cold medications such as Actifed, Sudafed, rock salt.

♦ A large variety of chemicals, which may be stored in food preparation areas or the refrigerator in unlabeled or inappropriately labeled food or drink containers such as juice container, soft drink bottles or ordinary pitchers.

6. Request that the investigating officer complete the following tasks and make them part and parcel to the criminal investigation:

a) Take measurements of the dangers in relation to the child’s height, i.e. if the drugs/lab apparatus/ingredients are on a table, how high is the table in relation to the child;

b) Describe the child’s access to the drugs and/or drug paraphernalia in the home;

c) Photograph every room in the house paying particular attention to the location of the proximity to hazards in relation to the child’s play area, sleeping area, food prep and eating area;

d) Document the location of any weapons or pornography that might be in the home;

e) Document food quantity and quality;

f) Document the ventilation in the home or lack thereof;

g) Document the potential for fire or explosion;

h) Detail all hazards found at the scene;

i) Photograph the children to document any injuries observed on the children and the physical appearance of the child. (If the law enforcement officer does not wish to photograph the child, this must be done so by the case worker).

j) Do not make the child’s photographs part of the evidence in the criminal investigation. Do not have more than one original copy of all photographs. There will be only one set of original photographs taken by law enforcement.

7. There may have been other children in the home who were not present at the time of methamphetamine lab seizure. These children need to be located and undergo a medical examination much like the children found at the lab site. (Refer to Section D, Protocols for safety of children.) The case worker needs to discuss these children with the CPS Supervisor and Legal staff to ensure the child’s safety.
| C. When a Case Worker unexpectedly enters a site where drugs are currently being manufactured | 1. The case worker must leave the area immediately or as soon as possible if he or she suspects an operational or non-operational methamphetamine laboratory is housed inside or outside of a residence.  
2. **THE CASE WORKER MUST NEVER** use sense of smell or touch to attempt to identify chemicals or unknown substances.  
3. The case worker must not walk through any area where chemicals may have been spilled. If the case worker develops reasonable suspicion of a methamphetamine lab while in the course of a home visit, efforts must be made to conclude the visit quickly, without causing concern to the individuals of the household that suspicion has developed. This is extremely important due to the extremely aggressive behavior, rapid mood swings and paranoia that use of methamphetamine may elicit.  
4. While in the home they do not:  
   a) Touch, move, lift, carry, push or slide anything  
   b) Shut off/turn on anything such as electrical machinery  
   c) Turn lights or electrical appliances on or off  
   d) Open refrigerator doors  
5. Exit the home immediately and notify law enforcement of the situation and coordinate the investigation. Local law enforcement agencies should have established a specific protocol for use when reports of methamphetamine laboratories are received.  
6. The case worker must immediately contact the CPS Supervisor and Legal Staff to seek a legal remedy to protect the child.  
7. Follow the procedures included in Section B. |
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| D. Protocols for Safety of children | If a child has been removed from a home where a known or suspected methamphetamine laboratory has been located and there is suspicion that the child was exposed to chemicals, the following procedures must be followed:  
   a) The case worker **must not** remove any items from the home. Any items (clothes, toys, etc.) from the house may be contaminated and pose further risk. The child must be decontaminated (defined as, at a minimum, washing the children and changing their clothes) before being transported to a medical facility for a medical assessment. |
b) A field medical assessment is performed to determine if the child is in need of immediate emergency care. The assessment can be performed by a medically trained person (i.e., an EMT, paramedic, nurse, etc.).

c) If the child is to be transported before decontamination, ask for police or EMS assistance. The child can be placed in a Tyvex suit or wrapped in a thermal blanket (space blanket) and transported to the appropriate medical facility for decontamination.

d) Once at the medical facility, decontamination needs to be completed as consistent with unknown chemical exposure.

e) After decontamination, a medical evaluation is completed on the child. The following is checked:
   ♦ Complete blood count;
   ♦ renal and liver functions;
   ♦ urine drug screen with zero tolerance; and
   ♦ A lead level.
   ♦ For more information on medical protocols for a child/children who live at or visit drug-production sites refer to website:
     http://digitalcommons.unl.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1011&context=ccflpubs

f) A complete and thorough head to toe examination must be performed. Specific screening may also be warranted based on the case circumstances, such as a chest x-ray, skeletal survey or pregnancy/sexually transmitted disease screening.

g) The child’s first urine after discovery in a methamphetamine lab is collected and maintained by hospital personnel until collected by law enforcement (using standard chain of custody techniques as you would other evidence).

E. When the Case Worker has been exposed to a methamphetamine lab

1. If the case worker is exposed to the area or building where methamphetamine is being or has been manufactured, decontamination procedures must be followed as outlined below:

2. Contaminated clothes must not be worn into the home, vehicle, or office if at all possible;

3. The case worker must thoroughly shower as soon as possible using soap and water.
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<td>Clothes must be washed in a mixture of water and bleach, and an empty cycle must run through the washing machine with water and bleach mixture.</td>
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<td>Soles of the shoes must be cleaned with soap and water.</td>
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<td>6.</td>
<td>If the case worker experiences physical symptoms and needs medical attention, he or she must seek medical attention <strong>immediately</strong> and begin Worker’s Compensation procedures by contacting Division of Human Resources. (Details of symptoms associated with methamphetamine poisoning are located in the <em>Resource Data on Methamphetamine</em>).</td>
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**F. Written Local Procedures**

| Each DCS office must | meet with its local law enforcement office and District Attorney’s office to establish **written procedures** for entering homes where children are present and there is a belief that an operational or non-operational methamphetamine laboratory exists. |