What’s Cooking in the Woods

Forest Service
George Washington and Jefferson National Forests
Lee Ranger District
Methamphetamine – also known as meth, crank, crystal, and speed – is a powerful central nervous system stimulant that is highly addictive.

The fumes, vapors, and spillage associated with cooking meth are highly toxic. They can produce chemical burns, ignite, and explode.
WHAT ARE THE EFFECTS OF METHAMPHETAMINE?

- Highly addictive
- Extreme euphoria or “rush”
- Following the “rush”, typically a state of high agitation or aggression
- Extreme paranoia or suspicious
- Reduced sensation of pain, increased anxiety, and nervousness
- Severe damage to internal organs
METH: INTO THE WOODS

Meth cooks are doing whatever it takes to avoid getting caught, including moving into rural areas where they're not as easily detected.
WHY THE WOODS?

- Increased police surveillance and training to detect methamphetamine labs in cities and towns

- Wooded areas provide isolation and seclusion for cooking and dumping
WHAT A METH LAB MAY LOOK LIKE

- Meth labs can fit into a small box, backpack, suitcase, trunks of cars, or coolers
- They can be small and portable

Backpack meth lab found on national forest.
METH LABS MAY LOOK LIKE THIS

There are many ways to cook meth and the process continues to change. Plastic bottle labs have been found on NF lands.
METH LABS MAY LOOK LIKE THIS

Always be alert to your surroundings.

Is this the cook? Leave the area immediately!

Open fire area

Ice on the road

COOK SITE
METH LABS MAY LOOK LIKE THIS
DUMPSITES IN THE WOODS

Meth cooks dump waste at local, state, national forests/parks, and campgrounds because disposing of meth-lab waste, in most cases, separates the cooks from criminal evidence that could land them in jail.
THINGS TO LOOK FOR

- Empty containers of cough/cold medicine
- anti-freeze
- drain cleaner
- red stained coffee filters
- Lithium battery casing
THINGS TO LOOK FOR

- Empty lantern fuel cans
- Standard 20lb propane tanks (will have blue coloring around the valve and handles)
WHAT TO DO IF YOU SUSPECT A METH LAB OR DUMPSITE

LEAVE THE AREA AT ONCE!

- Extensive training and protective gear are required before entering a meth lab.
- Many law enforcement agencies have special narcotics teams consisting of toxic waste specialist and trained law enforcement officers. Seizing meth labs is their job, let them do it.
- Stay at least 500 ft from any suspected lab.
YOUR GREATEST RISK IS AN OCCUPIED METH KITCHEN OR DUMPSITE

DO NOT CONFRONT OR APPROACH ANY INDIVIDUALS IN THE AREA

LEAVE IMMEDIATELY

Let law enforcement handle it. It’s their job and they have been trained to do it.
WHAT TO DO IF YOU SUSPECT A METH LAB OR DUMPSITE

CONTACT LAW ENFORCEMENT AND/OR THE FOREST SERVICE IMMEDIATELY

- Call 911 if you suspect a meth lab or dumpsite.
- Provide a detailed description of what you have observed that made you think a meth lab or dumpsite might be present.
WHAT TO DO IF YOU SUSPECT A METH LAB OR DUMPSITE

NOTIFY OTHERS WHO MAY BE IN IMMEDIATE DANGER

- If you believe there is an immediate danger, notify others in the area.
KIDS

- **REMEMBER** if you see anything that could be dangerous

- **DO NOT TOUCH** anything

- **STAY AWAY,** this means you and your friends

- **GO TELL** an adult
GROUP LEADERS

- **DO NOT TOUCH** anything

- **STAY AWAY** and keep the kids away

- **CONTACT** the Forest Service and/or local police
IN CASE WE FORGOT TO MENTION IT

GET AWAY

STAY AWAY

and DON’T TOUCH ANYTHING!
Special thanks to the Sussex County Methamphetamine Task Force, Newton, NJ for sharing their information with the USDA Forest Service.