

Tips for Home Visitors

BEFORE YOU GO:

- Ensure that you have obtained as much information about your client as possible.
- If possible, canvass the area around the home's address. Assess potential safety concerns and take precautions.
- Communicate your schedule and likely route to your supervisor. Notify your office of your arrival.
- Carry only your ID, cell phone and/or pagers and keys.
- Do not wear clothes and shoes that can impede your movement. Pants are best.
- Wear a name badge if you have one, but don't wear one around your neck. A clip-on is best.

UPON ARRIVAL:

- Park within direct sight of the home's entry. Park in a well lit, unobstructed area. Don't park in the driveway of your home.
- As you exit your car, be attentive to people in the area and any unsecured dogs.
- Be aware of any meth paraphernalia in the area surrounding the home.
- Keep your hands as free as possible. Do not be distracted by talking on a cell phone. Carry a personal alarm if feasible. (clip-on)

SAFETY DURING THE VISIT:

- Present yourself as calm, confident, observant and in control.
- Position yourself between the client and an exit.
- Sit in a hard-backed chair.
- Have an excuse to leave prepared in advance.
- Be aware of your surroundings and leave if your instincts tell you to.
- Pay particular attention to the client's protectiveness relating to certain rooms of the home.
- Leave the home immediately if you smell chemicals.

For more information on methamphetamine and related concerns, contact the Maine Methamphetamine Prevention Project at (207) 621-8118 or www.methwatchme.org

Possible Meth Lab Activity

UNUSUAL SECURITY/VENTILATION MEASURES:

- Baby room monitors being used outdoors.
- Video surveillance systems positioned to observe exterior of home.
- Elaborate fencing and heavy duty locks when it is not evident what is being secured.
- Numerous fans or industrial-type fans positioned to ventilate the home.
- Alarm systems and large, protective dogs

CHEMICAL ODORS ASSOCIATED WITH METH PRODUCTION:

- Ether-like: Aromatic, sweet odor often accompanied by a sweet taste. Sometimes described as a "hospital odor". **Nasal irritant.**
- Solvent-like: Sweet odor from common solvents used in paint thinners, paint removers, adhesives and cleaning fluids. Type of odor often found in an auto body shop. **Eye & nasal irritant.**
- Ammonia-like: An intense, sharp, irritating odor similar but much stronger than that from wet diapers, glass cleaners, cattle feed-lots or fertilizers. **Eye & nasal irritant.**

ADDITIONAL INDICATORS OF A METH LAB:

- Numerous chemical containers, matchbooks with striker plates removed, abundance of cold tablet containers.
- Reddish stained coffee filters, canning jars with multi-colored liquids, aquarium-type tubing used in bottles.
- Battery casings, crumpled/burnt foil.
- Windows blackened out or covered.
- People in and around meth manufacturing may exhibit respiratory irritation and/or chemical burns to skin.

INDICATORS OF METH USE:

- Dilated pupils
- Restlessness/agitation
- Paranoia and hallucinations
- Hyperactivity and compulsiveness
- Aggressiveness and violent behavior
- Talkativeness

If you suspect methamphetamine production, leave the home immediately and contact your local law enforcement agency.

