5-06/090.10 - Clandestine Laboratory Investigations

The discovery of any possible clandestine lab operation shall be immediately reported to the Narcotics Bureau.

Field personnel should clear the immediate area surrounding the site and set up a containment to prevent exposure or injury to the public or Department personnel. Field personnel shall not handle any chemicals or containers, nor shall they remain inside any location where a clandestine laboratory or associated chemicals are located.

Narcotics Bureau personnel will respond and determine if the site is a clandestine lab with sufficient evidence to warrant further investigation.

Depending on the determination made by Narcotics Bureau personnel at the scene, the following shall apply:

Clandestine Laboratory - Workable Information

Narcotics Bureau investigators shall be responsible for notifying the Allied Laboratory Enforcement Response Team (ALERT). The ALERT is a multi agency task force comprised of personnel from the Sheriff's Department and other agencies specifically trained and equipped to enter, make safe, and process clandestine laboratory sites.

The ALERT personnel will remove potential controlled substance and hazardous materials to a safe location near the original site. The ALERT will call the Scientific Services Bureau which shall respond.

Hazardous evidence is removed from the site proper by ALERT to a safe location where SSB can assist in processing the evidence for prosecution or further investigation. SSB personnel shall not enter the clandestine laboratory site unless it has been cleared by the ALERT personnel and declared to be safe by the ALERT site safety officer.

The Scientific Services Bureau will assist Narcotics Bureau and ALERT in the evidence gathering process. SSB will photograph, fingerprint, and take small evidentiary samples as needed. The samples will be given to ALERT for safe packaging and transport to the crime lab for final analysis.

Narcotics Bureau personnel will not take items of evidence from a clandestine laboratory site that are hazardous materials.

The ALERT will also call the Los Angeles County Health - Fire Department Hazardous Materials unit for response to the site. When the ALERT personnel, SSB, and the Narcotics Bureau investigators have completed their on-site investigation, the Health - Fire Department Hazardous Materials unit will notify the California Department of Toxic Substance Control. The DTSC will arrange for a disposal company to respond to clean up the site and dispose of the remaining hazardous and contaminated material.

The Narcotics Bureau is responsible to ensure that an investigator or patrol personnel remain at the site until the safe departure of the Health - Fire Department Hazardous Materials team and the disposal company personnel.

Field personnel will be required to maintain security of the site until cleanup is completed by the disposal company.

Scientific Services Bureau personnel may respond to requests for assistance in processing clandestine laboratory sites within Los Angeles County from other agencies or task forces that have personnel specifically trained and equipped to enter, make safe, and process clandestine laboratory sites.

All bulk amounts of chemicals and finished products will be disposed of as provided for in the Uniform Controlled Substances Act. All labeling of chemical containers required by state law will be done by the chemical disposal company.

Occasionally, field personnel encounter large amounts of PCP, other hazardous controlled substances, or precursor chemicals packaged in unsafe containers. If the packaging and quantity of the PCP or other chemicals is such that field personnel cannot safely handle, Narcotics Bureau shall be notified.

The Narcotics Bureau will respond and contact ALERT for assistance. The Scientific Services Bureau shall respond to photograph, fingerprint, and obtain evidence samples as needed. ALERT shall package and transport evidence samples to the crime lab for final analysis.

The L.A. County Health - Fire Department Hazardous Materials unit will also be contacted to respond and/or arrange through the California Department of Toxic Substance Control for a private chemical disposal company to remove the remaining quantity of hazardous materials.

Clandestine Laboratory/Associated Chemicals - No Workable Evidence

Narcotics Bureau personnel shall be responsible for notifying the Los Angeles County Health - Fire Department Hazardous Materials Unit. The Hazardous Materials Unit will contact the California Department of Toxic Substance Control to arrange for a private chemical disposal vendor to respond and clean up the site.

Field personnel will be required to maintain security of the site until cleanup is completed.