



GREENVILLE COUNTY  
SHERIFF'S OFFICE

GO - 241

# GENERAL ORDERS

# CLANDESTINE LABORATORIES

**PURPOSE:**

The number of clandestine laboratories found in Greenville County is consistently on the rise. The rising number is coupled with a consistent increase in level of lab sophistication. Labs pose a significant health hazard to the public and law enforcement personnel. The purpose of this written directive is to provide procedures for increased safety of both the public and responding Sheriff's Office personnel. Additionally, it provides procedures for safe efficient response and investigation.

**DEFINITIONS:**

**CLANDESTINE LABORATORY** – An illicit operation consisting of a sufficient combination of apparatus and chemicals that either has been or could be used in the manufacture or synthesis of controlled substances.

**CLANDESTINE LAB TECHNICIAN** – A deputy who is clandestine lab certified and has the training and equipment required to process clandestine labs in compliance with OSHA Regulations and Standards as outlined in 29 CFR 1910.120.

**LAB HAZARDS:**

**Primary lab hazards:**

1. Unstable, explosive hazardous materials – touching, moving, or jostling chemical containers may cause an explosion. The mere turning off of a Bunsen burner when chemicals are at the right stage can cause an explosion.
2. Probable existence of armed “booby” traps.
3. Fire.
4. Poisonous vapors.
5. Poisoning through skin absorption.
6. Asphyxiation.

**LAB DISCOVERY:**

**Methods of lab discovery:**

1. Citizen complaint.
2. Deputy response to other calls for service.
3. Traffic stops – mobile labs.
4. Requests from other agencies.
5. Knock & Talk – Whenever there is credible information or reasonable suspicion to believe a lab is present, only Certified Clandestine Laboratory Technicians under the direction of a Vice & Narcotics Supervisor should be used to conduct this type of Knock and Talk. Although non-certified

personnel are not prohibited from conducting a Knock and Talk on a possible lab location that does not meet the criteria above;

- Caution should be utilized at all times and assistance by certified technicians should be requested whenever the situation and information is elevated to meet the above criteria.
- Supervisors may also request the assistance of Certified Clandestine Laboratory Technicians to conduct a Knock and Talk on possible lab locations whenever they deem necessary for the safety of their personnel.

6. Search Warrant – Search Warrants on suspected Clandestine Laboratories will only be conducted by personnel trained for search warrants wearing the appropriate personal protective equipment. If SWAT is used, a certified Clandestine Laboratory Technician must be present during the unit briefing and during entry operations.

7. Technicians under the direction of a Vice & Narcotics supervisor. Non-certified personnel are prohibited from lab search warrant operations.

**NOTE** – Only Certified Clandestine Laboratory personnel operating in compliance with 29 CFR 1910:

1. Will intentionally enter or approach a known or suspected clandestine lab site.
2. Stop a vehicle that is suspected to contain a clandestine lab.

**EXEMPTION TO THE ABOVE** – Articulate emergency circumstances exist indicating serious injury or loss of life.

**LAB RESPONSE FOR**

**UNIFORM PERSONNEL: CALL FOR SERVICE** - Document initial information on Lead Sheet and forward to Vice & Narcotics within 24-hours.

**INADVERTENT DISCOVERY** – Including traffic stop:

1. Secure the scene.
2. Notify your immediate supervisor.
3. Notify Vice & Narcotics on-call investigator.
4. Detain persons at scene for decontamination.
5. Standby the scene until relieved.

**NOTE** – Uniform personnel are responsible for providing uniform scene security until released by a Vice & Narcotics supervisor.

**LAB RESPONSE FOR  
CLANDESTINE LAB  
TECHNICIAN:**

Depending on the situation, there are several different methods of response for Clandestine Lab Technician. Factors that will determine the response include, but are not limited to the location of the lab, the type of lab, and whether or not the site has been used for dumping.

At a minimum, when a response is required for an outdoor lab or possible dump site the following personnel will be required to respond:

- Two certified clandestine lab technicians
- At least one Uniform Patrol deputy

For other lab responses, the following personnel will be required to respond:

- Two certified clandestine lab technicians
- Two rescue personnel (These persons at a minimum must be either clandestine lab tech certified, hazardous material technicians, or trained fire personnel.)
- One site safety deputy (must be clandestine lab tech certified)
- At least one Uniform Patrol deputy

Other resources that may be needed on a lab can include scribe/inventory personnel, truck operators, and fire department and medical personnel.

**Technician's duties -**

1. Assume command of the scene.
2. Notify appropriate agencies (fire, EMS, etc.).
3. After evaluation of scene, call appropriate assistance to process scene.
4. Notify Vice & Narcotics supervisor.
5. Implement procedures outlined in the **Vice & Narcotics Clandestine Laboratory Manual**.
6. Comply with federal, state and local environmental, health, and safety laws and regulations applicable to clandestine lab operations as described in this agency's Mitigation Plan on page 3 of this order.

**Site Safety Deputy-**

The site safety deputy is responsible for ensuring the safety of the lab itself as well as the investigators on scene. The site safety deputy has the authority as well as the responsibility to ensure that those technicians entering the lab site are approved to enter and work labs, physically capable, and operating within the scope of 29 CFR 1910.120, 1910.134, and the Sheriff's Office Clandestine Laboratory Manual.

The Site Safety Deputy is responsible for the health and welfare of all personnel entering or reentering a clandestine laboratory. Onsite medical personnel shall perform pre-entry and exit vital signs on all personnel. The following vital signs shall be deemed prohibitive for entry or reentry:

- Blood Pressure: 150/100 or higher
- Pulse: Sustained rate of 100 or higher

In addition, the Site Safety Deputy must ensure compliance with the current OSHA Respiratory Standard (i.e.: face mask seal with no more than stubble growth and current fit testing).

**HAZARDOUS MATERIALS/  
EVIDENCE HANDLING  
AND DISPOSAL:**

Certain materials recovered from the scene of a clandestine laboratory may need to be handled and processed as evidence or found property and placed into Property and Evidence. At the point that these items can be disposed of, certain protocol will need to be followed to ensure compliance with applicable laws and regulations governing hazardous materials disposal. A clandestine laboratory technician will ensure that the method of disposal is handled by a certified HAZMAT contractor and all OSHA regulations are adhered to. The following procedures will be followed when disposing of these materials:

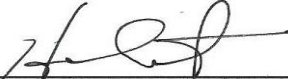
- A certified clandestine laboratory technician will respond to P&E and consolidate all items to be disposed of.
- The materials will be handled only by certified technicians using appropriate PPE, and the materials will be taken to an offsite location.
- A certified cleanup crew will be notified to respond to the location to dispose of the materials.
- A supplemental report will be written to document the disposal of the materials.

**Clandestine Lab Mitigation Plan:**

1. All Greenville County Sheriff's Office clandestine lab technicians will be subjected to medical examination as required in 29 CFR 1910, OSHA General Industry Standards. This medical examination will occur annually regardless of age. It will coincide with the medical fitness testing, as described in General Order 123, and will include pulmonary/lung function assessment. The Vice & Narcotics Sergeant is responsible for maintaining records of each technician's examination.
2. All Sheriff's Office clandestine lab technicians will comply with the training regulations stated in 29 CFR 1910. The Vice & Narcotics Sergeant is responsible for maintaining records of each technician's initial and recertification training.
3. All clandestine lab technicians will comply with the regulations stated in 29 CFR 1910 as it pertains to the use of Personal Protective equipment and other safety equipment.
4. A site safety officer will prepare a comprehensive contamination report on each seized/closed laboratory in compliance with 29 CFR 1910. Reporting includes: Sheriff's Office incident report, Clandestine Laboratory Investigation Hazard Assessment and Recognition Plan, and National Clandestine Laboratory Seizure Report.
5. Sheriff's Office clandestine lab technicians will contact SLED to request the agency's approved, hazardous waste contractor to dispose of all chemicals, associated glassware, equipment, contaminated materials, and waste from a seized laboratory.
6. Sheriff's Office clandestine laboratory technicians will contact SLED to request the agency's certified clean-up of laboratory sites. Per SLED/COPS contract, all materials taken from a laboratory will be taken to a licensed facility for disposal and/or recycling, if applicable.
7. The Vice & Narcotics Sergeant, working closely with the SLED, will conduct a quarterly review of records to ensure proper procedures have been followed concerning the transportation, disposal and/or recycling of all chemicals, associated glassware, equipment, contaminated materials and waste from a seized laboratory.
8. The Greenville County Sheriff's Office has in place a valid written agreement signed by the Director of the South Carolina Department and Environmental Control ensuring that county DHEC offices will: (a) evaluate, in a timely manner, the environmental condition at and around the site of a closed clandestine laboratory, and (b) coordinate with the responsible party, property owner, or others to ensure that any residual contamination is remediated, if necessary in accordance with State law and federal requirements.
9. The Greenville County Sheriff's Office Crimes Against Children Unit will respond to the scene when notified of children found at a clandestine laboratory site. All children, not placed under custodial arrest, will be immediately taken into Emergency Protective Custody

and decontaminated. The Crimes Against Children Unit will contact SCDSS for their response to the lab scene.

The Greenville County Sheriff's Office has in place a valid written agreement signed by the Director of South Carolina Department of Social Services ensuring that SCDSS will: (1) upon notification by the Greenville County Sheriff's Office regarding the emergency protective custody of a minor child or children at the scene of a clandestine laboratory, respond to the scene to take custody of said minor child or children for placement, and (2) ensure immediate medical testing of said minor child or children for methamphetamine/controlled substance toxicity, and (3) arrange for any follow-up medical tests, examinations, or health care deemed necessary for said minor child or children due to methamphetamine / controlled substance toxicity.



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Hobart Lewis, Sheriff