Knowing the signs is vital
Public and privately owned forests are fast becoming areas where criminals like to manufacture or grow illegal drugs, such as marijuana, methamphetamine, and hallucinogenic or “magic” mushrooms. The people and the equipment associated with producing these drugs are potentially very dangerous. If you plan to venture into woodland areas, as part of your duties or for recreation, knowing what signs to look for is vital to keeping you and others safe.

There are three types of illegal drug activity that you’re most likely to encounter in secluded, forested areas: marijuana “gardens” or grows, clandestine labs, and hallucinogenic mushroom grows.

Marijuana
Marijuana is the most frequently used illicit drug in the world and one of the most prevalent drugs produced outdoors. Marijuana may resemble tobacco and generally includes the dried, shredded leaves, stems, seeds, and flowers from the cannabis sativa plant. The marijuana plant contains THC (tetrahydrocannabinol) which produces a mind-altering effect on users. Short-term effects of marijuana use include problems with short-term memory, distorted perception, impaired coordination and balance, increased heart rate, bloodshot eyes, and increased appetite. Marijuana is usually smoked as a cigarette, in a pipe or bong, brewed as a tea, or mixed into foods.

Why should I be concerned?
Large outdoor marijuana growing operations, some numbering in the thousands, have been discovered on private lands, in National Forests and Bureau of Land Management areas. Most of the illegal grows have been in fairly remote areas with larger gardens protected by armed individuals. In the last several years, however, large outdoor grows operated by Mexican drug cartels or other criminal organizations have become more prevalent and are beginning to utilize more populated areas. Officers have found barbed wire fences, tree stands, and even exercise facilities at camps.

What To Look For
- Evidence of cultivation, drip-irrigation methods, PVC pipe, terraced gardens.
- Counter-surveillance such as lookout posts or tree stands in isolated areas.
- Unusual structures with garden tools, buckets, fertilizer bags and large amounts of trash.
- Isolated camps, trailers, or tents where there is no recreational activity nearby.
- Use of camouflage tarping.
- A vehicle regularly seen in the same remote area.
- Mesh-covered nurseries or plots containing plants at various stages of growth.

Clan Labs
A clandestine lab is a makeshift lab that is used to produce illegal drugs, such as ecstasy, LSD, and methamphetamine. These labs are typically assembled in remote areas to avoid detection by law enforcement and to conceal strong odors emitted during production.

Why should I be concerned?
Clan labs and their operators can be extremely dangerous. Increasingly, addicts are using remote, wooded areas, to set up temporary methamphetamine labs that can produce up to an ounce of meth in six to eight hours. Meth labs have even been found in campgrounds, picnic areas, and National Parks. Meth production may result in explosions and fires that can injure or kill people who knowingly or unknowingly come into contact with a lab or lab waste. Meth by-products are corrosive, flammable, and toxic. Meth “cooks” often pour excess chemicals directly onto the ground, down storm drains or wells, or into streams or lakes, which contaminate water supplies, kill wildlife, and destroy woodland areas.

A Clan Lab typically consists of common kitchen or household equipment:

- Mason canning jars
- 1 or 2 liter drink bottles
- Electric blenders
- Kitchen baking funnels
- Heat resistant glassware
- Plastic hoses
- Gas cans
- Coffee filters
- Box fans
- Solvent cans

The following chemicals are commonly used to make meth:

- Denatured/rubbing alcohol
- Automotive starting fluids
- Iodine Tablets/crystals
- Rock salt/table salt
- Cold tablets with ephedrine/pseudophedrine

How to Identify a Clan Lab
Large amounts of trash including:

- Antifreeze containers
- Lithium batteries/casings
- Neon-stained coffee filters
- Match books with missing striker pads
- Bottles, jars, etc. with glass tubing attached.
- Dead/dying vegetation by a suspected dump site.
- Strong chemical odors, such as ether, ammonia, or cat urine.
- Signs of chemical burns, spills, or burn piles with evidence of meth ingredients.

Vehicles loaded with liquid or chemical containers such as propane tanks, thermos or plastic drink bottles,
Is Your Suspect You Are at a Drug Lab:

> **DO NOT ENTER** a structure that contains a meth lab. Reactions between chemicals, or exposing chemicals to water or air, can cause fire and explosions.

> **DO NOT OPEN OR TOUCH** surfaces, coolers, containers, trash bags, waste, or touch meth lab operators. Contact with meth by-products can result in chemical burns. Inhaling toxic gases can send you to the hospital or can be fatal.

> **DO NOT DISTURB** the cooking process.

> **LEAVE AREA IMMEDIATELY**. Labs may have booby traps.

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**Hallucinogenic Mushrooms**

Several species of mushrooms have hallucinogenic compounds. The psilocybe is one of the most common hallucinogenic mushrooms and contains two psychoactive compounds: psilocybin and psilocin. Mushrooms can be ingested alone or in combination with alcohol or illegal drugs, brewed in tea, dried and ingested in capsule form, or cooked and added to other foods.

**Why should I be concerned?**

Psilocybe mushrooms are becoming more popular as people discover that they are profitable and fairly simple to grow. Psilocybe spores and mushroom growing kits are legal and widely available for purchase on the Internet. According to one law enforcement source, "...the profit margin for mushrooms is virtually the same as it is for marijuana, but mushrooms are less detectable."

**How does it work?**

A large crop can be grown from just a few spores and takes about two to three months to produce full-size mushrooms. In indoor groves, operators cultivate the spores, then plant them in grain and later in straw saturated with nutrients and water.

**What To Look For**

Psilocybe mushrooms are cultivated in indoor and outdoor grow sites in much of the country, but are especially prolific in the Pacific region. Mushrooms flourish in poor light, so they can be grown indoors with simple fluorescent tubes, or outside in remote areas. Signs of use include dilated pupils, confusion, aggressive behavior, hallucinations, disorientation, and impaired coordination. Indoor mushroom gardens can contain airborne algae, mold, and other bacteria and large crops can become infected with various pathogens.

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**Safety Guidelines**

As a general rule for all situations . . .

✓ Do not rush into areas that you’re unfamiliar with. If you come across suspicious activity, such as clandestine laboratories, illegal mushroom groves, leave the area immediately and notify law enforcement.

✓ Do not enter the lab or grow area. Traps have been found near backwoods meth labs and psilocybe mushroom growing kits. Other suspicious activity, such as shotgun shell traps, fish hooks hung at eye level along trails, and pits of sharpened stakes designed to impale trespassers.

✓ Make sure people know where you are.

✓ Travel in pairs, if possible.

✓ Maintain the ability to communicate.

✓ Do not approach suspects.

✓ Report to proper agencies ASAP. Clean-up must be handled by law enforcement.

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**Personalized Contact Information**

**Law Enforcement:**

| Sheriff: | ____________________________ |
| City PD: | ____________________________ |
| State Police: | ____________________________ |
| Land Mgmt Agency: | ____________________________ |
| Company Contacts: | ____________________________ |

**Website References:**

- www.oregonmethwatch.org
- www.usdoj.gov/dea
- www.whitehousedrugpolicy.gov
- www.fs.fed.us/r6/mthoodleo

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**Forestland Risk/Resource Guide to Illegal Drug Activity**

**Marijuana, Clandestine Labs & Hallucinogenic Mushrooms**

**Report suspicious activity to your local law enforcement agency or Oregon State Sheriff’s Association:**

(800) 624-4405

Oregon Department of Justice

Oregon Hi DTA Program

Salem, OR 97301

(503) 378-6347/ fax (503) 373-1936

Keep above visor for reference