

DRUG HOUSES

Do you have a drug house in your neighborhood?

Drug houses don't just happen in other neighborhoods.

There are drug houses in all types of neighborhoods.

There are four things that make a drug house:

- Product
- Buyer
- Seller
- Location

Most neighborhoods have very little control over Product, Buyer, or Seller.

Drug dealers look for locations where neighbors do not communicate and isolate themselves.

This makes it easy to intimidate those neighbors that do notice drug activity.

Drug dealers like neighborhoods that say, "It can't happen here."

Money is a key element for the drug dealer.

If they establish a drug house in a neighborhood where kids and adults have money to buy drugs, business will thrive.

What are the warning signs of drug activity in the neighborhood?

Do any of these sound familiar?

- Excessive foot traffic to and from a house or property
- Loitering in or around a house
- Frequent and unusual traffic patterns such as: Stop - Enter - Leave
- Traffic frequently stops and a resident comes out and talks briefly with occupants of car
- Threats of intimidation connected to a residence
- Open exchange of drugs and money
- Gang activity in the neighborhood
- Graffiti on structures in the area
- Sudden increase in criminal activity

Prevention is the best way to stop drug houses!

You can reduce the chance that a drug house moves into your neighborhood.

Start a Neighborhood Watch and get to know your neighbors.

Meet and know your Community Police Officers. As problems develop in the neighborhood, work with law enforcement to resolve them quickly.

What should you do if there is a drug house in your neighborhood?

One of the tools of the drug dealer is

intimidation.

There is safety in numbers.

- Start a Neighborhood Watch or build a cooperative effort with other neighbors.
- Log all activity connected to the suspected drug house.
- Talk to your area Community Police Officer and give the information from your House Watch sheet to them.
- Speak with property owners about problems that the tenants are causing for the neighbors. If you are having problems, the property owner is probably having problems too.
- Report all problems to the appropriate agency. Police, Fire, Health, Public Works are just some of the agencies that you may call with problems.

How to Avoid Buying a Drug House

Sadly, we live in dangerous times.

We not only have to be careful of shoddy plumbing jobs, leaky roofs and shifting foundations, but we must also check for dangerous and illegal uses of our potential homes.

Don't be fooled into thinking that only houses in rougher, low-income areas harbor drug operations.

Many marijuana Grow ops are located in middle to upper class suburbs.

How to avoid buying criminalized property

It has become common to hear about police uncovering rental properties producing large amounts of drugs—unbeknown to the property owners.

Meth labs have also been found in homes, apartments and even hotel rooms.

The repercussions to the owners can be both financially and emotionally devastating.

Grow ops cause an immense amount of mold and permanent structural damage, not to mention contamination.

Meth labs use dangerous chemicals that cause explosions, fires and toxic vapors that permeate the building walls and flooring.

Social ramifications include dangers to children

playing in nearby areas where meth lab chemicals and paraphernalia are dumped.

Grow ops also increase risk of violent crime as rival gangs and criminals break into drug houses and forcefully steal crops.

Tips For Buyers and Landlords

If you're working with a Realtor, pull history on the property to see if it has changed hands frequently and if it was used as a rental.

By law it is required that identified drug houses be listed as such, but it may not be a known fact.

If you suspect something fishy, ask neighbors, check with the police and use a home inspector that has experience in checking for such activity.

Drug labs and grow ops operate in the city, rural areas, farms and warehouses.

Look for suspicious dump sites along roadsides, in yards and around buildings.

For meth labs you may see an unusual amount of chemicals and solvents such as: acetone, brake cleaner, toluene, rubbing alcohol, drain opener, camp fuel, paint thinner and gasoline additives.

Telltale signs of Grow ops include mold and moisture staining, unsafe wiring and unusual piles of garbage containing fertilizer containers, pots and soil left behind.

Also look closely if the water tank or chimney has been re-routed or if windows have been replaced with vents.

Ensure that you screen your tenants well. Take 2 copies of photo ID and run a credit and reference check.

Have a rental agreement that outlines who is living in or using the premises.

Check your property regularly. Speak to the neighbors and take note of any suspicious activity.

For Grow ops, look out for: exposed wiring, high-intensity lamps, rewiring and bypass to electric supply, excessive moisture, windows that have been covered with heavy curtains and moist with condensation.

You may also notice frost build-up on the eaves and vents during winter, 'skunky' smell and unusual traffic at the home at odd hours. If you suspect illegal activity, go to the police and have them investigate.