

## Illegal drugs labs pose risks

Senior officers are so worried by the health risks posed by illicit drugs laboratories that they have produced a manual to protect frontline officers who may stumble across them.

The guide has been put together for first responders and managers following the discovery of a number of Methamphetamine laboratories in the UK over the last two years.

Its aim is to prepare frontline officers for the dangers surrounding illicit drugs laboratories, or IDLs as they are known, as overseas evidence shows the vast majority are found accidentally.

The manual has clear 'dos and don'ts' for officers who come across an IDL. It says they may not at first sight look hazardous, but the risk of fire, explosion and chemical contamination 'must not be underestimated'. ACPO is encouraging all forces to 'make good use of the information' so officers understand the risks and know what to do.

"The impacts of IDLs on 'life and limb' are potentially grave," said Commander Simon Bray, chair of the ACPO Methamphetamine National Working Group.

In Australia, a scientist was killed when a canister found at an IDL exploded. A number of long-term illnesses, including some cancers, have been linked to prolonged contact with IDLs.

The manual is called *Managing Methamphetamine and Other Illicit Laboratories - The ACPO Manual of Guidance for First Responders and Managers* and can be downloaded at <http://www.acpo.police.uk/>

## Mental health sufferers struggle to get justice

Poor relationships between people with mental health problems and the police were the most frequently cited barrier to accessing justice, according to a new report by the charity, *Mind*.

It found that the majority of people who reported a crime felt they were not taken seriously and they were treated less favourably because of their mental health history.

One person involved in police training said one of the barriers was that the police often only came in contact with mental health sufferers 'at crisis point'.

"This affects their credibility when they come to report a crime," said the study.

It also found mental health awareness training was not widespread in the police service.

Seventy-one per cent of people surveyed said they had been victimised in the past two years, including being bullied, sexually harassed and assaulted.

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Mind: National Association for Mental Health

