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# Arkansas Clandestine Drug Lab Program: Thomas Hunting (Arkansas Department of Environmental Quality) Arkansas Water Works and Water Environment Association Presentation

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Mr. Thomas Hunting undertook a presentation at the Arkansas Water Works and Water Environment Association titled:

*Clandestine Drug Lab Program ("Presentation")*

Mr. Hunting is the Arkansas Department of Environmental Quality ("ADEQ") Cleanup Program Manager – Controlled Substance Contaminated Property.

The State of Arkansas addresses the cleanup of properties contaminated by the illegal manufacture of controlled substances, or clandestine laboratories through the authority of Arkansas Act 864 of 2007. Act 864 established a certification program for individuals who inspect, remediate, and remove contaminated materials from these properties. ADEQ must be notified after a clandestine laboratory has been discovered.

ADEQ maintains a listing of such properties.

Mr. Hunting's *Presentation* addressed a variety of related topics such as:

- Facts about methamphetamine ("meth")
- Definition of meth
- Illustrations of types of equipment used to produce meth
- "Items to watch for"
- Exposure risks

The *Presentation* noted that:

- For every pound of cooked meth produced, it is estimated that five to seven pounds of hazardous chemical waste are also produced. Much of the waste is dumped . . . down the drain.

A related projection was that in terms of wastewater, it is estimated that nine out of 10 times drug manufacturers dump waste down the toilets or sinks. Problems with such hydrocarbons being placed into the septic systems and the impact on bacteria were addressed.

The need for public and private wastewater personnel to address the possibility of the presence of meth (or disposal if suspected) was addressed. In suspected instances of contamination the possibility of collecting samples from nearby manholes and checking for elevated or suspected pollutants was discussed. Sampling activities were described including a listing of problem indicators such as:

- Ammonia spikes
- Adverse intake readings
- Unstable nitrification readings
- Excessive volatile organic compounds
- Iodine compounds
- White phosphorus
- Phosphine gas

The appropriate responses were also discussed.

Suggestions for property owners to prevent drug activity and/or the signs of an illegal drug lay were identified:

- Unusual odors
- Excessive garbage
- Blackened or covered windows
- Many cars at all hours

The hazards facing law enforcement were described as:

- Presence of chemicals
- Glassware & paraphernalia
- Boobytraps
- Gross chemical removal
- Removal of all occupants
- Notice of Removal to the property owner
- Submit EPIC form to ACIC

Mr. Hunting noted that ADEQ is involved in meth cleanup issues because of a legislative mandate. The law (Act 864) and agency regulation (Arkansas Pollution Control and Ecology Commission Regulation No. 32) were discussed. Also addressed was ADEQ Clandestine Lab Cleanup Standards. Further, the need for a property owner to hire only ADEQ certified contractors for related activities was noted.

ADEQ's role was described as including:

- Listing properties on its website
- Checking contractor report and records
- Removing properties from its website and purging all records 10 days after decontamination has been confirmed
- Issuing a "Ready for Reoccupation" certificate to property owner

The *Presentation* included an extensive number of relevant photographs and diagrams.

[A copy of the slides and \*Presentation\* can be downloaded here.](#)