



DODGE COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE

Dale J Schmidt Sheriff Scott Mittelstadt Chief Deputy

March Sheriff's Column - Methamphetamine is Here

For years I have feared the effects on our community when Methamphetamine (Meth) became widespread and prevalent here. Unfortunately, I am here to tell you that it is here and becoming more and more widespread. As a result, it is important for us all to have an understanding of what meth is and what we as a community can expect.

Don't get me wrong, meth has been in the Dodge County area for a number of years, but my deputies are reporting to me that they have seen a sharp increase in the impacts of meth use in recent months. Our drug unit, patrol deputies and detectives work hard every day to pick up the pieces and hold people accountable subsequent to meth use, but the problem is bigger than any police department or sheriff's office can overcome alone. We need our community to work together to combat this epidemic just as the community has and continues to work together on the heroin epidemic.

Meth brings a new set of problems and challenges to our community. Meth is a stimulant drug that increases a person's heart rate and blood pressure while making a user more likely to become agitated or violent. We have known that drug use is a contributing factor in most property crimes as many times users commit crimes as a means to pay for their dangerous habit. Meth use is no different. As a result of these users being likely to be more agitated, it increases the risk of violence when criminal activity occurs, especially if they are confronted at the time of the crime.

My deputies are responding to meth overdoses and individuals who are mentally ill and even suicidal while using meth. Many times users have no idea what they are doing and sometimes begin hallucinating as a result of the drugs they are using. This creates a very dangerous situation not only for law enforcement but also for the citizens they may come in contact with.

The things I am saying here may lead you to ask what you can do to help. First, the most important thing anyone can do is to be educated and understand the drug and what it can do to your family member or loved one. We must also understand that meth presents a danger to our residents and people we know may already be affected by this mind-altering drug. We must work to get those who are suffering from addiction help and we must support those addicted while they are going through the recovery process. Finally, we need to make sure that we hold those who are bringing these drugs into our community accountable for their actions discouraging others from making that same mistake.

My message to you this month is very general and there is so much for our community to learn on this, the latest dangerous public health emergency. I encourage you to research the signs and symptoms of meth use. I encourage you to know your options should you know someone with a meth addiction. I encourage you to report meth and other drug activity to law enforcement when you know someone who is using or distributing them in your neighborhood. Together, we can work to fight this deadly drug and keep Dodge County a safe and enjoyable place to live, work and visit.

Sheriff Dale J. Schmidt