



INCIDENT COMMAND SYSTEM PUBLICATION
JOB AID FOR RESPONSE TO HONEY OIL INCIDENTS
ICS 903

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This document contains information relative to the Incident Command System (ICS) component of the National Incident Management System (NIMS). This is the same Incident Command System developed by FIRESCOPE. Additional information and documentation can be obtained from the following source:

Cal OES FIRESCOPE

Document Control

23300 Castle Street

Riverside, Ca 92518

0(951) 782-4174

Fax (951) 782-4239

www.firescope.caloes.ca.gov

TABLE OF CONTENTS

TABLE OF CONTENTS.....	3
BACKGROUND.....	4
DEFINITIONS.....	4
TYPES OF OPERATIONS.....	4
WARNING SIGNS OF POTENTIAL SITES.....	5
POTENTIAL HAZARDS.....	5
DISPATCH AND RESPONSE.....	5
SITUATIONAL AWARENESS.....	5
INCIDENT SAFETY.....	6
LAW ENFORCEMENT.....	6
CONTACTS.....	6
MORE INFORMATION.....	6

BACKGROUND

- Marijuana was legalized for medical use in California in 1996 and for recreational use in November 2016.
- Concurrent with the marijuana industry, the production of honey oil has increased and poses a significant risk to firefighter safety. This presentation is intended to highlight the dangers faced by firefighters when encountering honey oil production operations.
- Residential sites are commonplace.
- In the past, honey oil was intended for personal use; however, it is now used to manufacture many products.
- Many operations are associated with organized crime.
- There is the potential for violent confrontation.
- Firefighters responding to incidents involving honey oil are challenged by a variety of safety concerns.
- Response to honey oil incidents requires a high level of situational awareness.
- Firefighter safety is the highest priority.
- Incidents involving honey oil often include critical injuries (particularly burn injuries) and/or fatalities and may include the rescue or recovery of victims, providing medical assistance, fire suppression, and will require coordination with EMS and law enforcement.
- Pre-incident training and preparedness drills should be conducted to build a close partnership with assisting and cooperating agencies.

DEFINITIONS

- Grow house - a property, usually located in a residential neighborhood, that is primarily used for the production of marijuana and often also produces honey oil.
- Butane Honey Oil (BHO) - Honey oil that has been extracted using Butane.
- Butane Gas - the most common solvent used to chemically extract the THC.
- Note: Non-Butane extraction methods also exist, such as: Ethanol, Isopropyl Alcohol, Propane and CO2.
- Other common names of the liquid form of honey oil: Badder, Budder, Distillate, Earwax, Hash Oil, and Wax
- Other common names of the solid form of honey oil: Crumble, Crumble Wax, Crystalline, Honeycomb, Pull-and-Snap, and Shatter

TYPES OF OPERATIONS

- Co-located with legal marijuana operations. Illicit extraction operations are often found within these locations.
- Can be found in residential or commercial structures.



WARNING SIGNS OF POTENTIAL SITES

- Unusual smell/odor
- Rarely occupied home
- Unusual waste such as containers
- An unkept lawn
- Laboratory equipment inside structure
- Propane, butane bottles
- Suspicious individuals
- Cameras, high fences, locked gates, heavy chains, boarded or covered windows, unusually high security

POTENTIAL HAZARDS

- Structural damage
- Devices designed to injure responders/anti-personnel devices
- Weapons on site
- Fire
- Explosion potential
- Chemicals

DISPATCH AND RESPONSE

- A response may appear to be routine, based upon dispatch information, until arriving on scene.
- An incident may appear relatively safe upon arrival yet can change quickly.
- Initial and continuous size-ups and complete 360's are essential.
- Additional hazards presented with these incidents will guide/determine operational objectives.
- Appropriate PPE and safety considerations should be identified for all emergency personnel.



SITUATIONAL AWARENESS

- Devices designed to injure first responders may be present throughout the structure.
- Hazardous materials may be present such as: Propane, Butane, Co2, and Ethanol

INCIDENT SAFETY

- Expect critically injured patients.
- Fight fire with potential hazards in mind.
 - Consider a defensive strategy!
- Expect to find some structural compromise.
- Consider heavy streams and large handlines
- Do not touch anything in the operational area.
- Do not turn on/off any electrical power or light switches.
- Do not open or remove containers with chemicals or suspected chemicals.
- Remember to perform gross decontamination.

LAW ENFORCEMENT

- Request local law enforcement immediately.
- Coordinate first responder safety with law enforcement.
- Following firefighting operations, ensure evidence is preserved as much as possible to assist the investigation.



CONTACTS

- Law enforcement: Local, State, and Federal
- Hazardous materials response team
- Building department and structural engineers
- Environmental health department
- Medical transport
- Environmental Protection Agency (EPA)
- Urban Search & Rescue Unit(s)
- Terrorism Liaison Officer

MORE INFORMATION

- For more information, or to contact members of the Incident Safety Subcommittee, please explore the FIRESCOPE website: <https://firescope.caloes.ca.gov/>