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ICS 903: Job Aid for Response to Honey Oil Incidents

FIRESCOPE Incident Safety Subcommittee

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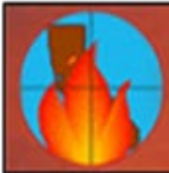
Background

- 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.



Background (continued)

- 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.



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Background (continued)

- 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.



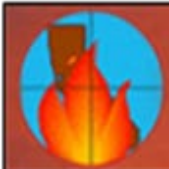
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Definitions

- 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.



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Definitions (continued)

- 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

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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.





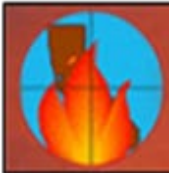
Warning Signs of Potential Sites

- 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



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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.

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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

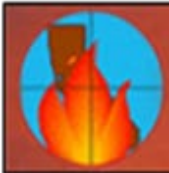
- Request local law enforcement immediately.
- Coordinate first responder safety with law enforcement.
- Following firefighting operations, ensure evidence is preserved as much as possible to assist the investigation.





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



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For more information, or to contact members of the Incident Safety Subcommittee, please explore the FIRESCOPE website.

<https://firescope.caloes.ca.gov/>