



# New Jersey

## Drug Threat Assessment



National Drug Intelligence Center  
U.S. Department of Justice

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# New Jersey Drug Threat Assessment

*National Drug Intelligence Center  
319 Washington Street, 5th Floor  
Johnstown, PA 15901-1622  
(814) 532-4601*

## Preface

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This report is a strategic assessment that addresses the status and outlook of the drug threat in New Jersey. Analytical judgment determined the threat posed by each drug type or category, taking into account the most current quantitative and qualitative information on availability, demand, production or cultivation, transportation, and distribution, as well as the effects of a particular drug on abusers and society as a whole. While NDIC sought to incorporate the latest available information, a time lag often exists between collection and publication of data, particularly demand-related data sets. NDIC anticipates that this drug threat assessment will be useful to policymakers, law enforcement personnel, and treatment providers at the federal, state, and local levels because it draws upon a broad range of information sources to describe and analyze the drug threat in New Jersey.

# New Jersey Drug Threat Assessment

## Executive Summary

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The distribution and use of illegal drugs continue to pose a serious threat to the safety and security of New Jersey citizens. Powdered cocaine and crack cocaine are readily available and are associated with more violent crime than any other drug, making cocaine the state's primary drug threat. Low cost, high-purity heroin is nearly as serious a threat. The user population is younger and using the high-purity drug increases health risks. Heroin may surpass cocaine as the primary drug threat in New Jersey; it already has in some areas of the state. Marijuana is the most prevalent drug in New Jersey, and abuse is high, particularly among teenagers and young adults. The production and use of methamphetamine are a growing concern for law enforcement officials since users have a propensity toward violence. The availability of other dangerous drugs, particularly MDMA and GHB associated with rave parties, is rapidly increasing. Pharmaceutical diversion of drugs such as Adderall, Dexedrine, Ritalin and most recently OxyContin, is a developing threat in New Jersey, and law enforcement officials report that pharmaceutical diversion is a lucrative business.

**Cocaine** poses the most serious drug threat in New Jersey. Powdered cocaine and crack are readily available, account for a high number of treatment admissions and more convictions than any other drug, and are commonly associated with violent crime including assaults, drive-by shootings, and homicides. Colombian drug trafficking organizations (DTOs) are the dominant cocaine suppliers for New Jersey-based criminal groups. Colombian DTOs and Dominican criminal groups control most of the wholesale distribution of cocaine in New Jersey, depending on the area. African American criminal groups, particularly in southern New Jersey, and Dominican criminal groups throughout the state are the dominant retail distributors.

**Heroin**, primarily South American, represents the second most significant problem, and may soon surpass cocaine as the primary drug threat in New Jersey. High purity, low cost heroin is readily available in the state. New Jersey has one of the highest rates of treatment for heroin use in the nation, a high death rate, and a user population that has expanded to include young, middle-class individuals. The same groups that control cocaine supply and distribution also control the supply and distribution of South American heroin in the state. Nigerian and other West African criminal organizations smuggle Southeast Asian heroin, while Lebanese, Pakistani, Nigerian, and other criminal groups smuggle Southwest Asian heroin to New Jersey.

**Cannabis cultivation and marijuana use** are widespread in New Jersey. Law enforcement officers in the state seized over 37,000 tons of the drug between 1995 and 1999. Marijuana is the most readily available, least expensive illicit drug in New Jersey, but remains a lower threat than cocaine and heroin because it is not commonly associated with violent crime. The rural areas of New Jersey provide many opportunities for growing cannabis outdoors; however, sophisticated indoor grow operations that produce high quality marijuana are increasing in number and volume. Mexican, Jamaican, and Caucasian criminal groups dominate the distribution of marijuana, some of which is transported in tractor-trailers from the Southwest Border to New Jersey.

**Methamphetamine** distribution and use are an increasing threat in New Jersey; however, the threat remains low when compared with other drugs. P2P is the most common production method used in the state. Traditional organized crime groups supply methamphetamine to outlaw motorcycle gangs and local independent Caucasian criminal groups that distribute the drug in New Jersey, primarily in the central and southern counties, and to states such as Pennsylvania, Ohio, West Virginia, and North Carolina. Teenagers and young adults also sell methamphetamine at raves.

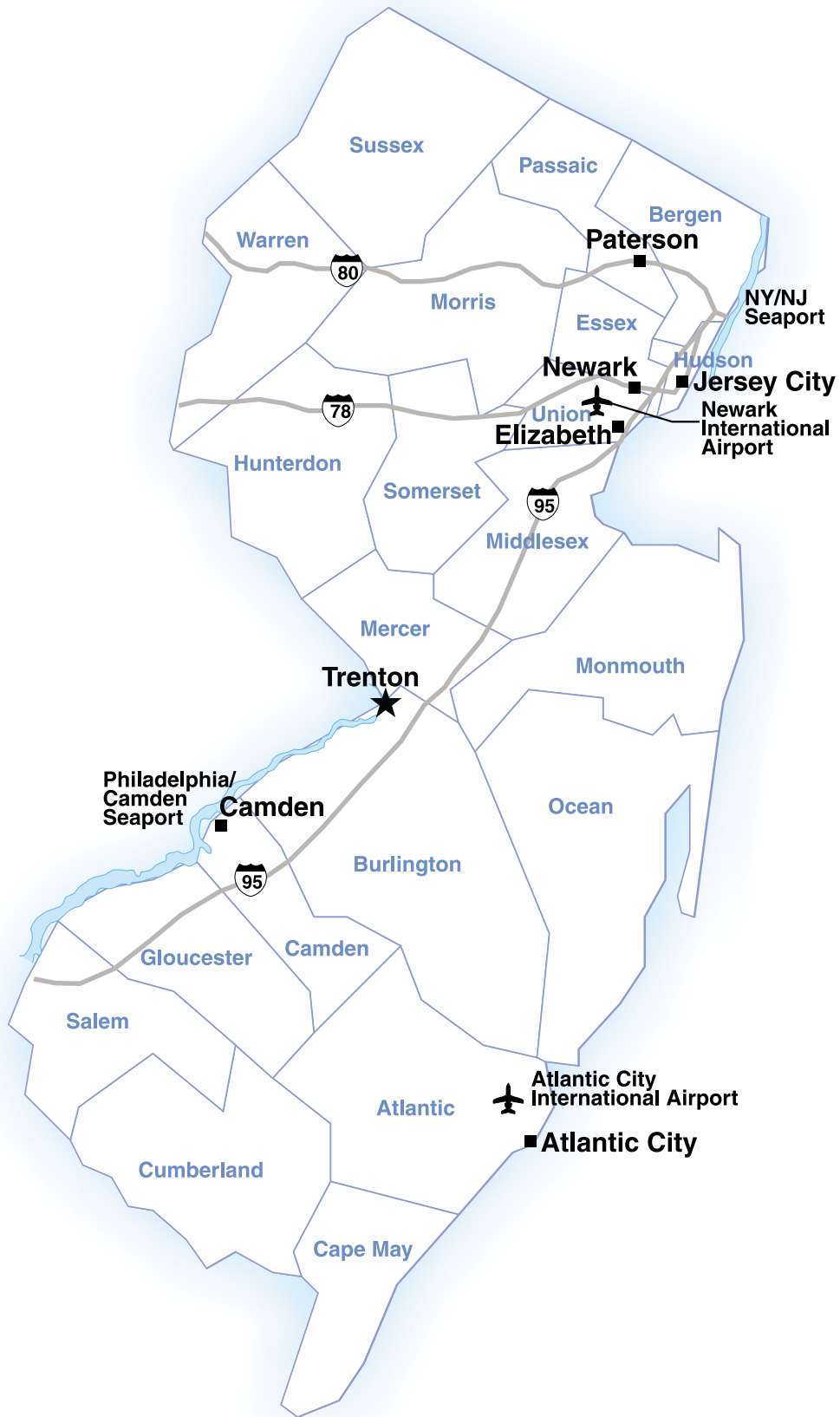
**Other dangerous drugs (ODDs)** such as MDMA, GHB, and khat are a growing threat in New Jersey. Many ODDs are commonly available at raves, nightclubs, and on college campuses. ODDs are popular with teenagers and young adults, especially those who attend raves in the rural areas of New Jersey, where the drugs are easily accessible. Cocaine, heroin, and methamphetamine are also available at raves and have been taken in combination with other drugs such as MDMA and GHB.

**Money laundering** continues to be a major problem in New Jersey. Drug proceeds, particularly from cocaine and heroin, historically have been laundered in New Jersey. New Jersey's proximity to New York (a major financial center) and its array of transportation options continue to offer unique alternatives for bulk shipments of cash and other money laundering techniques. Money launderers use Atlantic City casinos to convert cash into casino chips or tokens and write checks on casino bank accounts. However, a state law enacted in 1999 makes penalties for some methods of money laundering equivalent to those for murder and rape. This law did not affect the state's wire transfer franchises and check cashing outlets, and drug money launderers continue to use these methods.

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*New Jersey.*



# New Jersey Drug Threat Assessment

## Overview

New Jersey is the ninth most populous state in the nation with 8.4 million residents in 21 counties. New Jersey is the most densely populated state in the nation and is strategically located as a drug transshipment point and distribution center. The two largest cities in New Jersey, Newark and Jersey City, boast large, ethnically diverse populations—as do many others. New Jersey has busy seaports, two international airports, and borders two key distribution centers—New York City and Philadelphia—all of which enhance its role as drug transshipment point. Drug distributors and users pose a significant threat to public health and safety throughout the state.

New Jersey has a wide array of transportation options available for both licit and illicit activities. Drugs concealed in shipments of legitimate goods transported by truck, private vehicle, railcar, maritime vessel, aircraft, and parcel delivery service have an excellent chance of reaching their destination because of the volume of traffic traveling to and through the state daily. New Jersey has a 130-mile coastline and two major seaports, New York/New Jersey and Philadelphia/Camden. Port Newark and the Elizabeth Port Authority Marine Terminal, part of the NY/NJ Seaport, together constitute one of the largest containerized port complexes in North America. Longshoremen handled over 1.6 million containers at the New Jersey ports in 1999, up

Fast Facts	
New Jersey	
Population (2000)	8.4 million
U.S. ranking	9th
Median income (1999)	\$49,930
Unemployment rate (1999)	4.6%
Land area	7,419 square miles
Shoreline Coastline	1,792 miles 130 miles
Capital	Trenton
Other principal cities	Camden, Elizabeth, Jersey City, Newark, Paterson
Number of counties	21
Principal industries	Agriculture, petrochemicals, manufacturing, research, development

from 1.1 million in 1991. (See Table 1 on page 2.) Canadian Pacific, CSX, and the Norfolk Southern railroads provide service to Port Newark. The Portside International Rail Container Terminal is one of the East Coast's largest intermodal



facilities for handling containers. Over 10,000 trucking companies operate in conjunction with Newark’s port facilities. New Jersey has two international airports, Newark International Airport in northern New Jersey and Atlantic City International Airport in southern New Jersey. Newark International Airport is the ninth busiest airport in the United States and fifteenth busiest in the world, with over 33,814,000 passenger arrivals and departures in 1999. The airport is also the ninth busiest in the United States in terms of cargo volume with 1,078,809 tons shipped in 1999. International passenger traffic has increased 175 percent over the last 5 years, making Newark International Airport one of the fastest-growing airports in the country. Traffickers smuggle illegal drugs into Newark International Airport from source areas such as Colombia, Mexico, Jamaica, and Europe. A maze of superhighways throughout the state, particularly Interstates 78, 80, and 95, accommodates a high volume of commercial and private traffic traveling to New Jersey from various parts of the country.

**Table 1. Port Statistics, New Jersey, 1991–1999**

Year	Containers	TEUs*
1991	1,111,894	1,865,471
1992	1,205,338	2,014,052
1993	1,180,861	1,972,692
1994	1,219,139	2,033,879
1995	1,327,448	2,262,792
1996	1,335,379	2,269,145
1997	1,460,373	2,456,886
1998	1,475,913	2,465,993
1999	1,685,358	2,828,878

Source: Port Authority of New York, New Jersey.

\*Twenty-foot Equivalent Units

The four largest cities in New Jersey—Newark, Jersey City, Elizabeth, and Paterson—are located in the five counties of the state that are part of the New York and New Jersey High Intensity Drug

Trafficking Area (HIDTA) and are within 15 miles of New York City. The number of drug stash houses and operation sites is on the rise in these areas as law enforcement initiatives push distributors out of New York. In 1999, the New York and New Jersey HIDTA conducted more drug investigations in New Jersey than in New York. Despite law enforcement arrests of key members of several criminal groups in New Jersey, traffickers continue to smuggle in large amounts of drugs, which they distribute locally and nationwide.

Numerous drug trafficking organizations (DTOs), criminal groups, and gangs transport and distribute drugs to and through New Jersey. Colombian DTOs are the dominant cocaine and South American heroin suppliers for New Jersey-based criminal groups. Colombian DTOs and Dominican criminal groups control most of the wholesale distribution of cocaine and South American heroin in New Jersey, depending on the area. African American criminal groups, particularly in southern New Jersey, and Dominican criminal groups throughout the state are the dominant retail distributors. Caribbean, Cuban, Jamaican, Mexican, Russian, Nigerian, Pakistani, Puerto Rican, and other Hispanic criminal elements, among others, also transport both drugs to the state. New Jersey, particularly Newark and Camden, serves as a transportation hub for bulk quantities of cocaine and heroin smuggled to the state; however, additional quantities destined for New Jersey are transshipped through New York City and Philadelphia. Mexican, Jamaican, and Caucasian criminal groups dominate marijuana distribution, some of which is transported in tractor-trailers from the Southwest Border to New Jersey. Outlaw motorcycle gangs (OMGs), traditional organized crime groups such as Italian Organized Crime (IOC) and teenagers and young adults at raves dominate methamphetamine distribution in New Jersey. New Jersey is a transshipment point for some methamphetamine destined for Pennsylvania and states as far away as Texas. Mexican and Filipino criminal groups also transport and distribute methamphetamine in the state, but to a lesser extent. Israeli and Russian criminal groups transport other

dangerous drugs (ODDs), particularly MDMA, (3,4-methylenedioxymethamphetamine) to New Jersey where OMGs, teenagers, and young adults then control most of distribution in the state.

Several street gangs are involved in drug distribution and violent crime throughout the state. Survey responses to the National Drug Intelligence Center (NDIC) National Street Gang Survey Report 2000 illustrate that most of the 19 reported street gangs in New Jersey distribute drugs and commit violent crimes, including assaults, drive-by shootings, and homicides. The Bloods, Latin Kings, and Ñetas street gangs and Five Percenters, a cultural group, are the most prominent (have the most chapters). (See text box on page 4.) All distribute cocaine, heroin, and marijuana from Jersey City and Irvington, New Jersey. The Latin Kings and Ñetas street gangs and Five Percenters cultural group also distribute in Camden, while the Bloods distribute in Eatontown.

Street gangs distributing powdered cocaine and crack, particularly at open-air drug markets, pose the greatest threat to the health and safety of New Jersey's citizens; however, heroin is a significant threat as well. Heroin and crack users account for a high number of treatment admissions in New Jersey. Crack cocaine users are often violent, while heroin users risk exposure to HIV as injectors "shoot up" and share needles, resulting in increased risks to public health and safety. The number of injecting drug users infected with HIV in New Jersey increased 4 percent, from 7,115 in 1998 to 7,410 in 1999. Ninety percent of the state's 21 task forces report that open-air drug markets are prevalent. Hunterdon and Sussex, two very rural counties, are the exceptions.

Law enforcement officials dedicate fewer resources to investigate the distribution and use of marijuana, methamphetamine, and ODDs in part because of the large number of heroin and cocaine abusers in New Jersey. Although marijuana is the most prevalent drug, users do not typically engage in violent crime. Methamphetamine is reportedly available in 18 counties, but is typically distributed in the central and southern counties in the state. While law enforcement officers started to seize

methamphetamine and methamphetamine laboratories in New Jersey in 1997, the methamphetamine threat is not as great as it is in the west and mid-west. ODDs, which include designer drugs and diverted pharmaceuticals, are available mostly at raves and college parties, where users are typically friendly and peaceful.

The New Jersey Division of Criminal Justice (NJDCJ) reports that drug-related crime is increasing at an alarming rate throughout the state. NJDCJ estimates that 70 percent of violent crime results directly from drug activity. Drug-related arrests in New Jersey fluctuated between 1995 and 1998. State law enforcement agencies reported a 4 percent increase in drug-related arrests from 1995 to 1996. During the same period, the number of murders, aggravated assaults, and robberies decreased. The number of drug-related arrests in New Jersey decreased 2 percent, from 65,317 in 1997 to 64,011 in 1998. Young adults under the age of 21 committed 40 percent of all drug abuse violations in the state in 1998.

The number of federal drug offenders sentenced in New Jersey is consistent with the national average; however, the percentage of heroin- and cocaine-related sentences is much higher in New Jersey than nationwide. Drug offenses composed over 35 percent of all federal sentencing cases in the state in 1999, compared with the national sentencing average of 41 percent. Over 77 percent of all drug sentences in the state were cocaine- or heroin-related, a 20 percent higher ratio than the national average. More significantly, heroin sentences represent 38 percent of all federal sentencing cases, compared with 8 percent nationally.

New Jersey, particularly Newark, has a high but stable number of emergency department (ED) mentions and treatment admissions. There were 844 ED mentions per 100,000 in Newark in 1998, the third highest of the 21 metropolitan areas studied (behind Baltimore and Philadelphia), according to the Drug Abuse Warning Network (DAWN). According to Treatment Episode Data Set (TEDS), New Jersey ranked at least third in the United States for annual drug treatment admissions and admissions per 100,000

### **Bloods**

Bloods gangs originally formed in Los Angeles in the 1960s and primarily are composed of African Americans. Since the mid-1980s, the Bloods have spread across much of the United States. In New Jersey, gangs that identify themselves as Bloods began independently and generally do not have any connection to the Los Angeles-based gangs. Bloods sets in the northeast generally identify with the United Blood Nation, which began in Riker's Island in New York City in the early 1990s. Various sets of the United Blood Nation are found throughout New Jersey and surrounding states. Bloods gang members have a propensity for violence and engage in drug sales, homicide, robbery, extortion, and auto theft.

### **Latin Kings**

Latin Kings is a predominately Hispanic street and prison gang with two major factions, one in Chicago and the other in the northeast. This gang started as a social group in Hispanic communities but later evolved into organized criminal enterprises involved in drug trafficking and violent crime. Latin Kings is a highly structured gang that relies on strict, detailed charters to maintain discipline. The Chicago-based Latin Kings is the foundation upon which all Latin Kings gangs are based. The gang operates drug distribution enterprises on the North and Southeast Sides of Chicago and has expanded throughout Illinois and the nation. Latin Kings in the northeast started in the Connecticut prison system in the late 1980s as an offshoot of the Chicago-based Latin Kings. This gang operates drug distribution enterprises in New Jersey and surrounding states. The Latin Kings has attempted to consolidate the Chicago- and northeast-based factions.

### **Ñetas**

The Ñetas originated as a Hispanic prison gang in the Puerto Rican prison system in the 1970s. The Ñetas has many chapters in the U.S. prison system and in many communities, primarily in Connecticut, Florida, Massachusetts, New Jersey, New York, Pennsylvania, and Rhode Island. The Ñetas is an organized gang that uses drug trafficking as its major source of income and is also involved in other criminal activities such as extortion, intimidation, robbery, assault, money laundering, weapons trafficking, and murder.

### **Five Percenters**

The Five Percent or the Nation of Gods and Earths, founded in 1964 by Clarence Edward Smith Jowers upon his expulsion from the Nation of Islam, is a loosely knit organization made up mostly of African Americans. The name Five Percenters, derived from the "Mathematics" of the Nation of Islam "Lessons," is symbolic of members believing they are the true five percent gods of the universe with the knowledge and wisdom to deliver the black man from the home of the devil. Five Percenters do not consider their beliefs a religion and teach Islam as a righteous culture for black individuals. They believe that a black man with the knowledge (the Five Percent) is a god of himself as well as his people and that the "eurogentiles" have deceived the whole world causing it to honor and worship false gods and idols. Understanding this philosophy is essential for those who encounter Five Percenters. In its hierarchy, a Five Percenter male is a god with the highest status, followed by black males in the masses, earths (Five Percenter females), black females in the masses, white males, and white females. Some members do not believe they are accountable for the crimes they commit because of their status as gods or earths. Many members formed loosely organized sets that distribute drugs and commit violent crimes, including against each other. Some Five Percenters profess their beliefs through the lyrics of popular rap and hip-hop music.

from 1992 through 1997. In 1997, New Jersey had 23,922 treatment admissions for heroin abuse, second only to New York with 28,922 admissions. Over 7,300 treatment admissions

were for cocaine abuse, 5,340 for marijuana, 511 for other opiates, 507 for other drugs, and 140 for methamphetamine. According to the New Jersey Department of Health and Senior Services Drug

### Drug Arrests at Rutgers University

Rutgers University in New Brunswick had 138 drug arrests in 1998, the second highest number among large universities in the country, according to a survey of campus crime across the nation. The University of California at Berkeley had the most with 280 arrests.

Rutgers officials reported that they aggressively prosecute drug crimes; patrol with police in East Brunswick, Edison, Highland Park, New Brunswick, and Piscataway; and have arrest authority off campus, making arrest statistics high.

Source: *The Region*, "Rutgers Second Nationwide in University Drug Arrests," 8 June 2000.

and Alcohol Abuse report, the state has more than 60,000 drug treatment admissions annually. Of all treatment admissions, 42 percent reported heroin as the primary drug abused, 13 percent reported cocaine, and 9 percent reported marijuana.

Money laundering adversely affects New Jersey's economy as large amounts of cash are transported out of the state. The Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA), El Dorado Task Force, the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI), and the Internal Revenue Service (IRS) investigated a Mexican banking scandal with serious, far-reaching financial implications that forced the state government to consider financial reforms to help offset this threat.

Colombian and Dominican DTOs constitute the greatest money laundering threat in New Jersey despite a law established in 1999 that toughens penalties for some methods of money laundering.

## Cocaine

Cocaine, particularly crack, poses the most serious drug threat to New Jersey, as street-level cocaine distribution and use often lead to violence. Powdered cocaine and crack are readily available throughout the state. About 40 percent of all treatment admissions in New Jersey in 1997 were cocaine-related, although cocaine was usually reported as a secondary rather than the primary drug used. Newark had over 3,500 cocaine treat-

The law does not cover the state's numerous check cashing outlets and wire transfer franchises and drug money launderers continue to use these methods.

Colombian and Dominican DTOs ship bulk quantities of U.S. currency to their countries inside hidden compartments in automobiles transported on maritime vessels. Another popular method used to smuggle currency out of the United States involves couriers who take flights from New Jersey to Colombia via Venezuela. According to USCS, couriers usually travel in groups of about six, and smuggle about \$90,000 total, wrapped in carbon paper to thwart X-ray detection at airports. Colombian money launderers meet the couriers once in the country and usually pay the couriers between 2 and 5 percent of the total. Law enforcement reports indicate that money laundering organizations purchase electronics and/or clothing in bulk and ship them directly to Colombia, where they are sold at discounted prices.

The money laundering problem is exacerbated by the casino industry in Atlantic City. Corrupt casino employees facilitate money laundering activities. In June 1998, federal and state law enforcement officers in New Jersey posing as drug distributors arrested four casino employees working at three casinos and charged them with laundering \$400,000. Drug money launderers also use Atlantic City casinos to convert cash into casino chips or tokens and draw checks on casino bank accounts. The importance of casinos in money laundering is difficult to quantify at present. A money laundering commission was established to more closely monitor these issues.

ment admissions in 1998. Colombian DTOs are the dominant cocaine suppliers for New Jersey-based criminal groups. Colombian DTOs and Dominican criminal groups control most of the wholesale distribution of cocaine in New Jersey, depending on the area. African American criminal groups, particularly in southern New Jersey, and Dominican criminal groups throughout the state are the dominant retail distributors.



## Abuse

The number of cocaine users in Newark, calculated by ED mentions, is high but stable. Newark was third in the nation in 1991 with 241 ED mentions per 100,000, after New Orleans and Baltimore, and sixth in the nation with 208 ED mentions per 100,000 by 1998. Newark ranked lower in 1998 than in 1991 because the number of ED mentions per 100,000 increased dramatically in Philadelphia, Chicago, and Atlanta in 1998. According to DAWN, Newark was one of nine cities with a high percentage (more than 20%) of cocaine ED mentions, and medical examiner (ME) data identified 144 cocaine-related deaths in 1999 in Newark alone. Table 2 shows the change in Newark cocaine ED mentions and mentions per 100,000 from 1991 to 1998, according to DAWN.

African American males who smoke crack and are over the age of 26 are the primary cocaine abusers in New Jersey. African American men accounted for 52 percent of admissions for cocaine; Caucasian men, 37 percent; and Hispanic men, 10 percent. Men represented 63 percent of all admissions in the state. Sixty-seven percent of abusers who reported cocaine as the primary substance of abuse smoked the drug, while the rest snorted it. Seventy-eight percent of African Americans, 59 percent of Caucasians, and 45 percent of Hispanics admitted for treatment in New Jersey reported smoking crack. According to the Community Epidemiology Work Group (CEWG), calculations using New Jersey 1999 cocaine ED mentions and treatment admissions suggest an

aging user population; over 90 percent of all cocaine users were over the age of 26.

In 1991 and 1999, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention surveyed over 15,000 students in grades 9 through 12 and reported a significant increase during that period in the number of students reporting having used cocaine in the month prior and at least once in their lifetime. About 4 percent of the students surveyed in 1999 reported they used cocaine at least once in the month prior, compared with 2 percent in 1991. Almost 9 percent of students surveyed in 1999 said they tried cocaine in their lifetime, compared with only 6 percent in 1991.

**Table 2. Cocaine Emergency Department Mentions and Mentions Per 100,000 Newark, 1991–1998**

	Year				
	1991*	1995	1996	1997	1998
<b>Cocaine mentions</b>	<b>4,016</b>	<b>4,658</b>	<b>4,436</b>	<b>3,571</b>	<b>3,743</b>
<b>Mentions per 100,000</b>	<b>241</b>	<b>268</b>	<b>253</b>	<b>201</b>	<b>208</b>

Source: U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Drug Abuse Warning Network, Year End Emergency Department Data, 1998.

\*The year 1991 is used for historical purposes only.

## Availability

Cocaine continues to be readily available throughout most of New Jersey. About 43 percent of all federal drug sentences in New Jersey in 1999 were related to powdered and crack cocaine. According to the Federal-wide Drug Seizure Statistics (FDSS), law enforcement officers in New Jersey seized more kilograms of cocaine

than any other illicit drug except marijuana between fiscal year (FY) 1995 and FY1999. (See Table 3.) Over 38 percent—12,544 of 32,741 kilograms—of all drugs seized under the FDSS were cocaine. The amount of cocaine seized between FY1995 and FY1999 peaked in FY1997 and has decreased substantially since that time.

DEA offices in Atlantic City and Newark report that cocaine remains readily available.

Cocaine prices in New Jersey vary depending on the location and amount of the sale; however, low, stable prices indicate that there is an abundant supply of cocaine in New Jersey. (See Table 4 on page 8.) Price differences between northern (all counties above and including Monmouth) and southern (all counties below Monmouth County) New Jersey indicate two distinct drug markets in the state. Powdered cocaine costs slightly more in southern New Jersey, while crack costs more in northern New Jersey. DEA reported that cocaine prices decreased slightly in 2000, and are similar to 1998 prices. However, according to the Middle Atlantic-Great Lakes Organized Crime Law Enforcement Network (MAGLOCLLEN) Regional Drug Price and Purity Report, powdered cocaine prices increased slightly from August 1997 to September 1999.

Although cutting agents are used at various distribution levels, the high purity of powdered cocaine and crack in New Jersey indicates that cocaine is not being cut as much as it was in the past. Purity for powdered cocaine ranged from 30 to 90 percent in 1999, while crack was 35 to 97 percent pure at all distribution levels. DTOs often break kilogram quantities down into ounce or gram quantities before selling to midlevel or street-level distributors. The street-level distributors add

**Cocaine Smuggled in Produce**

The U.S. Customs Service (USCS) seized 564 kilograms of cocaine hidden in a Ryder truck transporting chili peppers and tamale leaves. Smugglers sprinkled the cocaine-filled boxes with garlic powder to try to thwart detection by canines. In May 1999, DEA and USCS seized 100 kilograms of cocaine hidden under 40,000 pounds of bananas at the Port of Newark in two refrigerated containers.

Source: New York/New Jersey High Intensity Drug Trafficking Area FY 2001 Threat Assessment.

diluents such as talcum powder and lactose, decreasing purity but creating more product, resulting in increased profits. Other distributors then purchase the powdered cocaine and add additional diluents, which reduces the purity even further.

The number of powdered cocaine and crack investigations varies according to area, but supports the conclusion that cocaine is readily available. The Warren County Prosecutor’s Office reportedly conducted 40 powdered cocaine investigations in 1999, similar to the number in 1998, and 20 crack investigations, less than in 1998. The Essex County Sheriff’s Office initiated 348 powdered cocaine investigations in 1999, an increase over 1998 numbers, and 15 crack investigations, a decrease from 1998 numbers.

**Table 3. Drug Seizures, in Kilograms, New Jersey, FY1995–FY1999**

Type	Year					Sum	Percentage
	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999		
<b>Heroin</b>	<b>33</b>	<b>58</b>	<b>97</b>	<b>87</b>	<b>57</b>	<b>331</b>	<b>1.01</b>
<b>Cocaine</b>	<b>1,595</b>	<b>3,149</b>	<b>4,071</b>	<b>1,799</b>	<b>1,930</b>	<b>12,544</b>	<b>38.31</b>
<b>Marijuana</b>	<b>2,207</b>	<b>11,401</b>	<b>953</b>	<b>1,813</b>	<b>3,299</b>	<b>19,672</b>	<b>60.08</b>
<b>Methamphetamine</b>			<b>1</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>0.02</b>
<b>Hashish</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>179</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>189</b>	<b>0.58</b>
<b>TOTAL</b>						<b>32,741</b>	<b>100.00</b>

Source: Federal-wide Drug Seizure Statistics, FY1995–FY1999.

**Table 4. Cocaine Prices (in Dollars), Northern and Southern New Jersey, 2000**

Weight	Northern New Jersey	Southern New Jersey
<b>Powdered Cocaine</b>		
<b>Kilogram</b>	22,000 – 30,000	27,000 – 30,000
<b>Pound</b>	7,000 – 20,000	9,000 – 15,000
<b>Ounce</b>	900 – 1,220	850 – 1,200
<b>Eight Ball (1/8 ounce)</b>	80 – 200	100 – 300
<b>Gram</b>	27 – 75	36 – 120
<b>Bag</b>	5 – 30	10 – 60
<b>Crack Cocaine</b>		
<b>Kilogram</b>	18,000 – 35,000	18,000 – 30,000
<b>Pound</b>	10,000 – 20,000	10,000 – 15,000
<b>Ounce</b>	600 – 1,800	800 – 1,200
<b>Eight Ball (1/8 ounce)</b>	100 – 250	100 – 240
<b>Gram</b>	16 – 45	27 – 40
<b>Bag</b>	5 – 50	5 – 20

Source: Drug Enforcement Administration, Newark Field Division, *Trends in the Traffic 4th Quarter FY2000*.

## Violence

Cocaine distributors use criminal alliances and violence to further their drug trade. DEA reports that street-level crack distribution and use often lead to violence. Distributors often commit drive-by shootings, drug-related homicides, rip-offs (stealing drugs from other distributors), and are involved in turf wars. Trenton police officials responding to the NDIC National Gang Survey 2000 reported that gangs such as the Latin Kings distribute cocaine and commit assaults. The Hudson County Prosecutor’s Office reported that gangs such as the Latin Kings and Queens, Bloods, and Ñetas, and the cultural group Five Percenters distribute cocaine and often commit assaults and homicides. The Middlesex County Prosecutor’s Office reported that the Latin Kings and Ñetas distribute cocaine and commit assaults, robberies, and homicides. The Warren County Prosecutor’s

Office reported that a large percentage of individuals arrested for burglary, theft, armed robbery, assault, murder, and other criminal activity abused or distributed cocaine. According to the Camden County Sheriff’s Office, 40 percent of all homicides in Camden County are linked to drugs, while the national average is only 8 percent.

Dominican, African American, Jamaican, and to a lesser extent, other Hispanic criminal groups account for most drug-related homicides in New Jersey. Dominican criminal groups have a long history of violence against rival drug factions and each other, retaliating to protect their merchandise and markets. Dominican criminal groups generally avoid open confrontations with law enforcement officials in order to maintain a low profile, but will retaliate when necessary.

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## Production

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Coca is not cultivated nor is cocaine produced in New Jersey. Most cocaine consumed in the world is produced in South America. Most cocaine shipped into the United States comes through the Mexico–Central America Corridor, but an increasing percentage is smuggled through the Caribbean Corridor. Colombian DTOs produce most of the cocaine smuggled to New Jersey, accounting for as much as 85 percent of the cocaine in the New York and New Jersey region.

Most of the crack sold in New Jersey is converted from powder in the state, including the cocaine that is transported from distribution centers in Miami, New York City, and Philadelphia. However, some powdered cocaine is converted to crack at distribution centers before it is smuggled to New Jersey. Several Warren County street gangs transport powdered cocaine from New York and Pennsylvania and convert it locally. New Jersey-based distributors purchase powdered cocaine in

pound and kilogram quantities from suppliers in Miami, New York City, and Philadelphia and process it into crack once back in New Jersey. In response to the NDIC National Drug Threat Survey 2000, the Warren County Prosecutor's Office reported that New York City- and Philadelphia-based distributors convert powdered cocaine to crack for sale, some of which is transported to New Jersey.

### Converting Powdered Cocaine to Crack

Powdered cocaine is dissolved in water, mixed with baking soda, and heated. The mixture is then rotated as it heats, which allows the cocaine to precipitate and coalesce into a soft mass. The solution is poured into a container, the mass is dried, and it is then divided into different sizes of "rocks" for distribution.

Source: Miller, Gary J., *Drugs and the Law*, Gould Publications Inc., 1992.

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## Transportation

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New Jersey is a major cocaine transportation hub. Although most of the cocaine in the state is shipped directly to New Jersey from Colombia, some of it is transshipped through New York and Philadelphia. Dominican, Puerto Rican, and Mexican criminal groups, among others, are dominant transporters of cocaine to New Jersey. Dominican criminal groups smuggling cocaine from Washington Heights in Upper Manhattan have easy access in and out of New York using the George Washington Bridge, which connects New York to New Jersey via Interstate 95. Although Dominican transportation groups are more prevalent in Washington Heights than in New Jersey, these groups actively transport cocaine to New Jersey. Colombian and Dominican criminal groups sometimes use Puerto Rican criminal groups to smuggle cocaine through Puerto Rico to Camden County. Criminal groups using the Walt Whitman and

Benjamin Franklin bridges, which connect Camden with Philadelphia, transport cocaine transshipped through Philadelphia to New Jersey.

Colombian, other Caribbean, and Jamaican criminal groups and several street gangs also transport powdered cocaine and crack to New Jersey, but to a lesser extent than the groups previously mentioned. In response to the NDIC National Drug Threat Survey 2000, the Warren County Prosecutor's Office reported that Caribbean and Jamaican criminal groups, as well as local and statewide gangs, transport crack from Philadelphia and New York City, some of which is transshipped through Newark to Warren County. OMGs, as well as the Bloods, Crips, Cash Money Boys, and Haitian Mafia street gangs transport powdered cocaine to Warren County.



**One of the Largest Drug Busts  
in New Jersey History**

New Jersey State Police seized 850 kilograms of cocaine and 863 kilograms of marijuana with an estimated street value of \$100 million inside a tractor-trailer carrying cartons of moldy yellow peppers. The bust occurred in February 2000 at the Vince Lombardi service area in Bergen County on the New Jersey Turnpike. Police arrested four men and a woman from New York and an Arizona man for possession and conspiracy to distribute. They also seized \$86,000 in cash and a 9-mm handgun. The amount seized was greater than the total amount seized in 1999 on New Jersey roadways.

Source: New Jersey State Police, News Release, 8 February 2000.

**Cocaine Pipeline from the Southwest  
to New Jersey Shut Down**

In June 2000, police arrested seven members of a Colombia-based DTO in Elizabeth and seized from a city warehouse approximately 400 kilograms of cocaine worth \$14 million on the street. Police also seized \$700,000 in suspected drug proceeds. A task force headed by DEA Newark followed a tractor-trailer that contained 16 boxes of cocaine hidden among the legitimate cargo of horse feed, which was destined for New Jersey. The cocaine was to be transferred to two sport utility vehicles inside the warehouse. The two distributors met in Houston and traveled to Los Angeles in a tractor-trailer where they picked up the cocaine and the legitimate cargo.

Sources: *Asbury Park Press*, 5 June 2000.

Tractor-trailers, aircraft, and maritime vessels are the preferred means of transporting large shipments of cocaine to the state, according to the DEA Newark Resident Office. Approximately 99 percent of the cocaine seized nationally in commercial vehicles from January 1, 2000, to April 30, 2000, was destined for New York or New Jersey, and most of those seizures occurred on Interstates 95, 78, and 80. Couriers, with cocaine concealed in their luggage, board airplanes and fly from source countries such as Colombia en route to Philadelphia International Airport and Newark International Airport to supply New Jersey markets. Cocaine transporters sometimes travel by bus on major interstates from the Southwest Border area to New Jersey. Mexican nationals transport some Colombian cocaine to New Jersey in tractor-trailers hauling large items that are difficult to inspect. Cocaine is also shipped by rail or through express mail services.

The USCS seizes more cocaine in New Jersey from commercial vessels than commercial aircraft, although both yield significant amounts. USCS seized more than 7,012 kilograms of cocaine in New Jersey smuggled aboard commercial maritime vessels between 1995 and 1999 as compared with 760 kilograms of cocaine smuggled on commercial aircraft. Law enforcement

officers made 210 seizures at Newark International Airport compared with 68 seizures at the Newark–Elizabeth seaport during the same period. Most cocaine seizures on maritime vessels averaged 200 to 300 kilograms, while seizures on commercial aircraft typically averaged 1 to 2 kilograms. For example, law enforcement officers stationed at Petty’s Island in Pennsauken, New Jersey, seized 2,190 kilograms of cocaine from a vessel originating in Venezuela in 1994, and 244.5 kilograms of cocaine from a vessel that sailed from San Juan in January 1996. The amount of cocaine seized at Newark International Airport increased from 40 kilograms in 1995 to between 100 and 300 kilograms each subsequent year, indicating that DTOs increasingly are using the airport to smuggle cocaine.

**The Newark and Elizabeth  
Port Authority Marine Terminal**

The Port of New York has eight marine terminals located around the harbor; however, 90 percent of the containerized cargo arriving at the port is handled at the Newark and Elizabeth Port Authority Marine Terminal.

Source: New York/New Jersey High Intensity Drug Trafficking Area FY1999 Threat Assessment.

## Distribution

Colombian DTOs are the dominant cocaine suppliers for New Jersey-based criminal groups. Colombian DTOs and Dominican criminal groups control most of the wholesale distribution of cocaine in New Jersey, depending on the area. Colombian criminal groups living in northern New Jersey, especially Hudson and Passaic Counties, and Queens, New York, control distribution networks offering multikilograms of cocaine in the surrounding areas.

### Multimillion-Dollar Cocaine Ring Dismantled

On February 29, 2000, a federal jury in Camden, New Jersey, indicted 14 individuals and all but the two top figures pleaded guilty to operating open-air drug markets and distributing large quantities of cocaine. One of the two men who did not plead guilty was convicted on two counts of money laundering; both men face life sentences.

Source: Camden County HIDTA, 29 February 2000.

Criminal groups selling cocaine at the wholesale level use Newark, Jersey City, Elizabeth, Paterson, Trenton, and Camden as distribution centers for smaller cities in and outside the state. These New Jersey-based groups are part of a larger distribution network responsible for transporting multihundred-kilograms of cocaine throughout the country. For example, Colombian DTOs supply multihundred-kilogram quantities of cocaine to Dominican criminal groups in Newark. Newark-based Dominican criminal groups then distribute multiounce or kilogram quantities to criminal groups in other major cities such as Paterson and Jersey City. Dealers then sell smaller quantities of cocaine in areas such as Hillsdale and Linden and throughout the state. Some of the powdered cocaine and crack distributed in New Jersey is smuggled from Washington Heights, New York, to New Jersey-based distributors who regularly travel to New York to purchase their product.

Although African American criminal groups, particularly in southern New Jersey, and Dominican criminal groups throughout the state are the dominant cocaine distributors at the retail level, Colombian, Puerto Rican, Jamaican, Mexican, Cuban, and other criminal groups also distribute powdered cocaine and crack. Most of these groups easily blend with New Jersey's diverse ethnic population and the state's proximity to New York makes New Jersey an appealing distribution area. Dominican criminal groups also control cut-houses, storefronts, and open-air markets in Camden, Newark, and Trenton, as well as those in other areas of the state. Street-level sales typically occur at open-air drug markets where cocaine, as well as other drugs, is generally sold. Cocaine is commonly sold in ounce and multigram quantities in vials.

### 52 Arrested on Cocaine Charges

Police officers in New Jersey arrested 52 individuals in a cocaine raid that encompassed four central New Jersey counties. A major street-level cocaine distributor from Sayreville, Middlesex County, sold an average of \$2,000 to \$3,000 worth of cocaine per day. Police seized from the distributor's car 40 bags of cocaine with a street value of \$5,000 and arrested a passenger. Police arrested 50 additional individuals and charged them with conspiracy to distribute or possess cocaine. Police seized six vehicles, \$30,800 in suspected drug proceeds in the distributor's apartment, and an additional \$2,000 in suspected drug proceeds from other suspects.

Source: *Asbury Park Press*, 26 February 1999.

Street gangs distribute powdered cocaine and crack at the retail level in New Jersey, as well. At least 10 street gangs distribute cocaine locally and within the state from Jersey City, Irvington, Camden, Asbury Park, Trenton, and Middlesex, according to responses to the NDIC National Street Gang Survey 2000. The Latin Kings, Ñetas, and Bloods are the most prominent gangs involved

in cocaine distribution on New Jersey streets. The Latin Kings and Ñetas distribute cocaine at the retail level in Jersey City and Camden, while the Latin Kings and Bloods distribute cocaine in Irvington. In response to the NDIC National Drug Threat Survey 2000, the Warren County Prosecutor’s Office reported that street gangs are the primary retail crack distributors in its county. Numerous gang members and OMGs relocated to Warren County in the past few years

and took over a major portion of the retail distribution of crack. The Phillipsburg Police Department reports that these OMGs and street gangs distribute crack in Phillipsburg, as well as across the border in Easton, Pennsylvania. The Bloods, Crips, Cash Money Boys, Haitian Mafia, and Latin Kings are the most dominant retail cocaine distributors in Warren County. These gangs use Phillipsburg and Easton as distribution points and stash locations.

## Heroin

The distribution and use of heroin represent the second most significant drug threat to New Jersey. It is readily available throughout the state and purity levels are stable but high. South Amer-

ican heroin is the predominant type in New Jersey. Southeast and Southwest Asian as well as Mexican black tar and brown powdered heroin are also available but to a much lesser extent.

## Abuse

Low cost, high purity heroin has attracted a new heroin user population in New Jersey since the early 1990s. High purity heroin can be smoked or inhaled, appealing to new users who would never consider injecting themselves with a needle. Heroin contributes to additional health problems and deaths, which were already high. ME data for 1999 reflected 109 heroin-related deaths in the Newark area alone—Essex, Morris, Somerset, Sussex, and Union Counties. The DEA Newark Field Office reported three heroin overdose deaths resulting from the brand names Viper,

Greyhound, and Homicide (Homicide tested 98% pure) in southern New Jersey in 2000.

Heroin was reported as the primary drug of abuse by 78 percent of all drug treatment admissions and was the most frequent ED mention per 100,000 (33%) in Newark in 1999. Newark was second only to Baltimore in the number of heroin mentions per 100,000 that same year. According to DAWN, ED mentions for heroin in Newark more than doubled between 1991 and 1998. The number of heroin and morphine ED mentions in

**Table 5. Heroin Emergency Department Mentions and Mentions Per 100,000 Newark, 1991–1999**

	Year					
	1991*	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999
<b>Heroin mentions</b>	<b>2,328</b>	<b>5,686</b>	<b>5,392</b>	<b>4,367</b>	<b>5,080</b>	<b>4,736</b>
<b>Mentions per 100,000</b>	<b>140</b>	<b>328</b>	<b>307</b>	<b>246</b>	<b>282</b>	<b>260</b>

Source: U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Drug Abuse Warning Network, Year End Emergency Department Data, 1999.

\*The year 1991 is used for historical purposes only.

Newark increased 16 percent, from 4,367 in 1997 to 5,080 in 1998. During this period, national ED mentions stabilized.

Most heroin users admitted for treatment throughout the state, particularly in Newark,

## Availability

**South American** heroin is by far the most readily available type in New Jersey. Federal and state law enforcement officials seize South American heroin much more frequently than any other type. During 1999, 82 percent (36 of 44 samples) of all heroin obtained through the Domestic Monitor Program (DMP) in New Jersey was South American. The actual percentage might be higher, as 7 out of the 44 samples were either unknown or unclassified because of insufficient quantities. Colombia-based DTOs supply Dominican, Colombian, and other criminal groups with multikilogram amounts of heroin, which they transport directly to New Jersey; however, some of the heroin destined for New Jersey is transshipped through New York and Pennsylvania. These criminal groups use couriers who fly on commercial airlines to transport an average of 1 to 3 kilograms of heroin per trip. Flights originate in Colombia, transit the Dominican Republic, Florida, Haiti, Jamaica, New York, Panama, Pennsylvania, and Texas, among others, en route to New Jersey.

**Southeast Asian** heroin is available to a much lesser extent than South American heroin in New Jersey. During 1999, about 2 percent (1 of 44 samples) of the heroin obtained through the DMP in New Jersey was identified as Southeast Asian. Some Nigerian or other West African criminal organizations smuggle heroin from Europe and West Africa through Newark International Airport.

**Southwest Asian** heroin is also available in New Jersey, but to a much lesser extent than South American heroin. No Southwest Asian heroin was seized under the DMP in New Jersey during 1999. Lebanese, Pakistani, and Nigerian criminal groups use couriers who smuggle Southwest Asian heroin

reported snorting as the primary means of administration (78%), injecting (21.5%), and smoking (0.5%) in the first half of 1998. Statewide, 60 percent of users reported snorting and 39 percent reported injecting during the same period.

to New Jersey. Purity levels have increased since the early 1990s, but Southwest Asian heroin distributors charge high prices and hold heroin until a buyer is located. This practice limits their market share in the state and the country.

**Mexican** heroin is available in New Jersey, but is rarely mentioned in law enforcement reporting. During 1999, no heroin purchased through the DMP program in New Jersey was identified as Mexican. While most law enforcement agencies in the state estimate Mexican black tar and brown powdered heroin to be a minimal threat, evidence garnered through recent seizures and arrests in “Operation Tar Pit” is troubling.

Of the heroin seized nationwide since 1995, one-third was seized in the New York and New Jersey area; a significant amount of that was transported through Newark International Airport. For example, the United States Customs Service (USCS) seized 1,015 kilograms of heroin nationally in FY1995—with 372 kilograms (37%) in the New York and New Jersey area. In FY1999, USCS seized 875 kilograms of heroin nationally—with 349 kilograms (40%) in the New York and New Jersey region.

FDSS figures document the availability of heroin—331 kilograms of heroin were seized in the state from FY1995 through FY1999. (See Table 3 on page 7.) The amount of heroin seized during that time frame was highest in FY1997 at 97 kilograms and gradually decreased to 57 kilograms in FY1999. Most seizures occurred at Newark International Airport on flights originating in Colombia, Jamaica, Panama, and Aruba.



### Operation Tar Pit: Coast-to-Coast Mexican Heroin Ring

A yearlong, nationwide investigation referred to as “Operation Tar Pit,” involving federal, state, and local law enforcement agents, resulted in the arrest of over 200 individuals in many U.S. cities. The case involved a Mexico-based DTO that imported and distributed heroin throughout the United States. The family was based in Nayarit, Mexico.

This DTO, consisting mostly of illegal aliens, used Los Angeles as its primary distribution center. In Los Angeles, the heroin sold for \$1,200 to \$1,500 per ounce; the price increased as the heroin was transported eastward. The DTO kept heroin in stash houses in Los Angeles for distribution to cells throughout the United States. The heroin was transported via commercial airlines and buses—primarily by young women who carried 1 to 2 pounds of heroin per trip. This DTO used express mail services just as frequently. About 75 percent of the heroin distributed by the group was Mexican brown powder and the rest was Mexican black tar. The DTO transported an estimated 80 pounds of heroin per month and distributed small amounts of cocaine.

The DTO formed transportation and distribution groups throughout the United States, including Alabama, Kentucky, Minnesota, New Jersey, and West Virginia. Operations were based in numerous cities including San Diego, Los Angeles, and Bakersfield, California; Chicago, Illinois; Reno and Las Vegas, Nevada; Salt Lake City, Utah; Nashville, Tennessee; Corpus Christi, Texas; Detroit, Michigan; Atlanta, Georgia; Denver, Colorado; Phoenix, Arizona; Honolulu and Maui, Hawaii; Portland, Oregon; Albuquerque, New Mexico; Cleveland, Columbus, and Steubenville, Ohio; Anchorage, Alaska; and Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania.

Since October 1999, law enforcement officials have seized 41 pounds of heroin in connection with the investigation. The heroin ranged in purity from 60 to 75 percent, even in gram-quantities seized.

Source: Drug Enforcement Administration, Press Release, 15 June 2000.

Heroin quantities seized from vehicles on New Jersey roads from 1995 to 1999 remained relatively stable—ranging from 0.7 to 3.5 kilograms—and about a third was destined for distribution in New Jersey, according to the El Paso Intelligence Center (EPIC) Operation Pipeline and Convoy seizure statistics. The number of seizures decreased from a high of 21 in 1995 to only 4 in 1999. Law enforcement officers in New Jersey made 21 heroin seizures totaling 2.6 kilograms in 1995, 18 seizures totaling 2 kilograms in 1996, 18 seizures totaling 3.6 kilograms in 1997, 6 seizures totaling 2.1 kilograms in 1998, and 4 seizures totaling 0.7 kilograms in 1999. Approximately 57 percent of the seizures took place on Interstate 95. About 28 percent of the heroin seized was destined for distribution in New Jersey, while the rest was destined for states as far north as New York and as far south as Georgia.

Heroin prices in New Jersey have generally increased and reflect two distinct markets in the state—northern and southern New Jersey. (See

Table 6 on page 15.) The distance between the distribution site and the source is one factor that might explain why prices are higher in southern New Jersey. Heroin prices statewide generally increased 33 percent per bag, 8 percent per ounce, and 5 percent per kilogram from August 1997 to September 1999, according to DEA and the MAGLOCLLEN Regional Drug Price and Purity Report. However, gram prices decreased 9 percent during the same period.

High purity heroin often exceeded 60 percent in 1999, an increase of over 5 percent from purity levels in 1996. MAGLOCLLEN reported that heroin purity in the state ranged from 10 to 90 percent at different levels of distribution. The DMP indicated that heroin purity at the street level in Newark ranged from about 50 to 90 percent in 1999. The average heroin purity at the retail level between April and June 1999 was the highest in the East Coast cities of Philadelphia (76%), New York (66%), Boston (68%), Newark (66%) and Atlanta (66%). Additionally, the DEA Atlantic

City Resident Office reported that heroin purity levels in the four southeastern counties of New Jersey—Ocean, Burlington, Atlantic, and Cape May—increased substantially in 1999. Law enforcement reports indicate that purity levels ranged from 74 to 84 percent at the retail level in those counties in 2000.

Although federal prosecutors in New Jersey win more convictions for cocaine than any other drug, heroin convictions are actually higher when powdered cocaine and crack are viewed independently. In 1999, convicted drug offenders composed about 36 percent of sentencing cases in New Jersey, compared with the national average of 41 percent. Heroin offenders represented the greatest percentage (38.6%), followed by powdered cocaine (34.4%), marijuana (11.4%), crack (8.5%), and methamphetamine (4.5%) offenders.

**Table 6. Heroin Prices (in Dollars), Northern and Southern New Jersey, 2000**

	Northern New Jersey	Southern New Jersey
<b>Kilograms</b>		
South American	70,000 – 90,000	125,000 – 200,000
Southwest Asian White	115,000	NA
Southwest Asian Brown	70,000 – 90,000	NA
<b>Pounds</b>		
Pound	35,000 – 110,000	75,000 – 125,000
1/2 Pound	20,000 – 60,000	40,000 – 70,000
1/4 Pound	NA	30,000
<b>Other Weights</b>		
Ounce	2,500 – 8,500	5,000 – 8,000
Gram	70 – 250	100 – 240
Brick (50 bags)	350 – 375	500 – 1,000
Bundle (10 bags)	90 – 100	100 – 200
Bag or Dec (.10 gram)	10 – 30	10 – 25

Source: Drug Enforcement Administration, Newark Field Division, *Trends in the Traffic 4th Quarter FY 2000*.

## Violence

Heroin users who commit crimes generally commit nonviolent property crimes to support their habits; however, heroin distributors at all levels engage in violence and other criminal activities to further drug distribution operations. Drug distributors use violence to protect drug shipments or to maintain control over distribution in a given area. In response to the NDIC National Gang Survey 2000, the Hudson County Prosecutor’s Office reported that gangs such as the Latin Kings and Queens, Bloods, and Ñetas, and the cultural group Five Percenters distribute heroin and often commit assaults and homicides. The Middlesex County

Prosecutor’s Office reported that the Latin Kings and Ñetas distribute heroin and commit assaults, robberies, and homicides. The Essex County Sheriff’s Office reported that an increase in the rate of personal property and violent crime in its area occurs in open-air drug markets where heroin, among other drugs, is frequently distributed.

Drug distribution in cities such as Newark often leads to violent turf wars. A large-scale turf war reportedly erupted in Newark in 1994 and lasted until 1997, when several midlevel suppliers were killed in a known heroin distribution area.

In 1997, the fighting subsided and the dominant groups regained control of the lucrative drug market. In 2000, the Essex County Sheriff's Office reported that heroin-related violence was increasing. That county conducted 316 heroin-related investigations in 1999, resulting in 541 arrests. The number of both investigations and arrests in Essex County had increased since 1998. Abundant supplies of heroin in Essex County might have led to turf wars between rival drug distributors. Mexican DTOs distributing Mexican brown powdered and black tar heroin in New Jersey may have been partly responsible for the surplus of heroin and subsequent turf war.

**Heroin and Weapons  
Seized in Paterson**

In December 2000, Paterson law enforcement officials seized \$125,000 worth of heroin (5,000 glassine envelopes), crack, four guns, and a 1991 Toyota Camry at a Paterson housing complex. The distributors hid the drugs in a hydraulically operated secret compartment in the Camry.

Source: *The Bergen County Record*, "Anti-drug Partnership: Agencies Cite Teamwork in Long Paterson Probe," 5 December 2000.

**Production**

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Opium poppies are not cultivated nor is heroin refined in New Jersey. Heroin is smuggled to New Jersey from Southwest Asia, primarily Afghanistan; Southeast Asia, primarily Burma, Laos, and Thailand; South America, primarily

Colombia; and Mexico, the four major source regions. In 1999, Afghanistan surpassed Burma as the world's leading heroin producer. Colombian DTOs supply most heroin distributed in, or transshipped through, New Jersey.

**Transportation**

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Air and land conveyances, both personal and commercial, are the primary means used to smuggle heroin to the state. Approximately 36 percent of the heroin seized in the United States is smuggled on commercial aircraft to distribution sites such as New York and New Jersey.

Most of the heroin transported to New Jersey from South America is smuggled by couriers flying on commercial airlines. Colombia has been the primary source country for heroin seized in New Jersey since 1995. Airline couriers account for over 90 percent of the South American heroin seized by USCS in FY1996. The couriers fly directly from Colombia, Venezuela, and Peru or transit Ecuador, Panama, Puerto Rico, or Aruba before arriving at Newark International Airport. New Jersey was one of the top five states in the nation in the quantity of heroin seized on commercial airlines between 1995 and 1999. Law

enforcement officers seized 269 kilograms of heroin transported on commercial airlines in New Jersey during the period 1995 to 1999. Couriers typically conceal heroin on their bodies, in clothes, or in luggage, or swallow heroin-filled balloons or condoms that are dipped in wax and weigh approximately 10 grams. Seizures at Newark International Airport indicate that the average swallower can ingest between 80 and 125 pellets per trip.

Newark International Airport is the primary entry point for heroin shipped directly to New Jersey from overseas. Several factors enhance Newark International Airport's role as a primary entry point in New Jersey. Thirty-two airlines serve international destinations from Newark International Airport. More than 15 direct flights arrive from Colombia every week, 7 direct flights arrive from both Panama and Peru, and less frequent flights arrive from

Aruba and Brazil. Many distributors prefer using airline passengers to smuggle heroin to Newark International Airport.

Nigerian and other West African criminal groups smuggle Southeast and Southwest Asian heroin from the source countries through Newark International Airport using couriers who typically bodycarry the heroin. Southwest Asian heroin is usually sewn into clothing or concealed in bottles or tobacco products. Couriers are paid between \$10,000 and \$20,000 per kilogram transported. Most Southeast Asian heroin in New Jersey is smuggled from Bangkok, Thailand, where there is a large Nigerian population.

#### **Mother Uses 5-Year-Old Daughter to Smuggle Heroin**

A woman attempted to smuggle 2 kilograms of heroin, valued on the street at \$2 million, to Newark International Airport, half on her person and half in her 5-year-old daughter's sneakers. They arrived at Newark International Airport aboard a flight from Panama on February 28, 2000. Another passenger aboard the same flight was apprehended for smuggling drugs and informed USCS agents that the woman and her daughter were also smuggling drugs.

Source: *The Star-Ledger*, 1 March 2000.

The quantity of heroin seized by USCS at Newark International Airport more than tripled from 1995 to 1997, from 28.2 kilograms in FY1995 to 104.3 kilograms in FY1997, indicating that DTOs may feel more comfortable using this airport to smuggle heroin than they have previously. Although John F. Kennedy International Airport remains the primary entry point for the number of international air passengers arriving in the New York and New Jersey region, the volume of commercial airline passengers arriving at Newark International Airport is increasing at a more rapid rate.

Southeast Asian DTOs use containerized cargo on maritime vessels and railcars to transport heroin from the U.S. West Coast to New Jersey. About half of the containerized cargo shipped from Asia

#### **12-Year-Old Boy Attempts to Smuggle Heroin**

Some criminal groups now use juveniles to transport kilogram quantities of heroin. Law enforcement officers arrested a 12-year-old boy in Bogota, Colombia, as he was attempting to smuggle 4.4 kilograms of heroin, hidden in two bags, into Newark International Airport on a flight from Ecuador via Panama in April 2000. The boy said he was offered \$18,000 to smuggle the heroin.

Source: Drug Enforcement Administration, 1998 U.S. Attorney Strategy Reports, Newark Division Overview.

to New Jersey is transshipped through West Coast seaports (Seattle and Tacoma, Washington, and Los Angeles, Long Beach, and Oakland, California), to Elizabeth overland in railcars, according to the USCS. The large volume of cargo transiting the Newark area provides an opportunity to conceal substantial heroin shipments from Asia. For example, in January 2001, DEA charged four individuals with smuggling 126 pounds of Southeast Asian heroin with a street value of \$21 million to Elizabeth in containerized cargo on a vessel. The heroin was concealed in 12 bales of cotton towels. The four individuals were arrested in Thailand and are awaiting extradition.

South American heroin is also shipped on maritime vessels, but the number of seizures remains low. Heroin is likely transported to New Jersey by the same Colombian and Dominican groups who prefer to smuggle bulk quantities of cocaine in maritime vessels. Colombian and Dominican criminal groups sometimes use Puerto Rican criminal groups to smuggle cocaine through Puerto Rico to New Jersey. The Port of Newark and the Elizabeth Port Authority Marine Terminal together constitute one of the largest containerized port complexes in North America and thus pose an enormous threat. Puerto Rico-based Dominican transporters conceal heroin as well as cocaine and marijuana in maritime containers, which are shipped on containerized cargo vessels to New Jersey. According to the USCS, over 47 percent of all South American goods are inspected in Newark and Puerto Rico shipments generally



pass without inspection. About 54 percent of all other shipments are inspected at this facility.

Some heroin destined for New Jersey is transported from the Southwest Border area in private vehicles by Mexican and Dominican criminal groups based in New York or Philadelphia. Once this heroin is shipped to Washington Heights and Queens, New York, it is then transported to Atlantic City, Camden, and northern New Jersey. These criminal groups also transport heroin from the Southwest Border in private vehicles to northwest Philadelphia, some of which is smuggled to Camden and southern New Jersey.

## **Distribution**

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South American heroin is distributed far more frequently than any other type of heroin in New Jersey. Colombian DTOs are the primary South American heroin suppliers for New Jersey-based criminal groups. Colombian DTOs and Dominican criminal groups control most of the wholesale distribution of South American heroin in New Jersey, depending on the area. Colombian DTOs tend to focus on supplying heroin and laundering money to minimize their exposure to law enforcement officers, while Dominican criminal groups are involved in all wholesale and retail distribution. However, Colombian criminal groups living in northern New Jersey, especially Hudson and Passaic Counties, and Queens, New York, do control some distribution networks offering kilogram quantities of heroin.

IOC groups are also involved in the wholesale distribution of heroin and cocaine in New Jersey, and they often use pizzerias as fronts for illicit activity. For example, law enforcement officers in New Jersey arrested over a dozen traditional organized crime members and their associates for distributing high quality heroin and cocaine out of pizzerias and wholesale restaurant supply businesses in April 1997. The drugs originated in South America, transited New York, and were allegedly delivered by Dominican nationals to pizza parlors in New Jersey.

The Essex County Sheriff's Office and DEA Atlantic City Resident Office report that some of the heroin in their counties is shipped directly to New Jersey, while the rest is transshipped through New York or Philadelphia. New York is a source for heroin in northern New Jersey, while sources in New York and Philadelphia supply some heroin to southern New Jersey. Reports indicate that "runners" travel by train to New York to obtain heroin and return to New Jersey by bus, in an effort to avoid law enforcement detection.

Nigerian or other West African criminal organizations are the dominant wholesale distributors of Southeast Asian heroin. Lebanese, Pakistani, Nigerian, and other criminal groups distribute Southwest Asian heroin in New Jersey. Nigerian and other West African criminal groups, among others, distribute Southeast Asian and Southwest Asian heroin in Camden and Newark. These criminal groups are most active in U.S. locations with established Nigerian populations such as Newark. Most Nigerian criminal groups return drug monies to Nigeria where the U.S. dollar and other currency is much stronger than the Nigeria naira.

Mexican, other Hispanic, ethnic Chinese, Indian, and other criminal groups, as well as traditional organized crime groups also distribute heroin in New Jersey, but to a lesser extent. Typically, these groups purchase kilogram quantities of heroin which they subsequently sell to street-level distribution networks.

Colombian and Dominican criminal groups recently started to distribute heroin directly from the wholesale to the retail level in New Jersey. These criminal groups sell heroin at the wholesale level to street-level distributors at prices previously charged to midlevel dealers. This method enables street-level distributors to increase profits.

African American criminal groups, particularly in southern New Jersey, and Dominican criminal groups throughout the state are the dominant retail distributors. Nigerian and other West African criminal groups distribute Southeast Asian heroin, while Lebanese, Pakistani, Nigerian, and other criminal groups distribute Southwest Asian heroin at the retail level in New Jersey. Chinese, Colombian, Puerto Rican, other Caribbean criminal groups, local independent distributors, Jamaican “posses,” and numerous street gangs also sell heroin at the retail level in the state. Some posses work for IOC families, according to the Newark Police Department. Many independents distribute heroin in New Jersey, some of which they purchase in New York City. DEA Atlantic City reports that Dominican, Colombian, Chinese, and Nigerian criminal groups are the principal street-level distributors in that area. While local independent distributors sell both South American and Southeast Asian heroin, Nigerian groups tend to distribute Southeast Asian heroin.

At least nine street gangs distribute heroin locally and within the state from Jersey City, Irvington, Camden, Atlantic City, Asbury Park, Trenton and Middlesex, according to responses to the NDIC National Street Gang Survey 2000. The Latin Kings, Ñetas, and Bloods gangs and the Five Percenters cultural group are the most prominent heroin distributors in New Jersey. They all distribute heroin in Jersey City. The Latin Kings and Ñetas distribute heroin in Camden, and the Bloods distribute heroin in Irvington.

Distributors at the retail level use various packaging and brand names on heroin, each of which is cut with various diluents and adulterants, when marketing their products to attract a greater

cross-section of customers. Heroin is usually packaged in glassine packets or heat-sealed small plastic bags known as dime bags, which cost \$10. Heroin is sometimes cut with diluents like cornstarch, wheat starch, and mannitol or adulterants such as benzocaine. New Jersey-based distributors sell heroin with the brand names Golden Needle, Super High, Enemy, Hurricane, Ruff Ryder, Devil’s Choice, No Limits, Dragon, Dog Food, Surprise, Attack, Methodone, Amadeus, Therapy, Dope Head, Mejor Control, Most Hated, Knock Out, and Face To Face.

Law enforcement sources in Newark report that heroin dealers use beepers to facilitate many heroin sales. Some law enforcement officers believe that the use of beepers coincides with a decrease in open-air or public street sales in favor of indoor sales or home deliveries. Historically, large quantities of heroin were distributed through face-to-face deliveries that were coordinated using beepers, while small amounts were sold on the street or through acquaintances. Criminal groups in 2001 coordinate heroin sales with beepers even when selling small quantities.

Teenagers and young adults who distribute and use heroin, particularly in suburbs and schools in New Jersey, are a growing concern. Law enforcement sources in Trenton and Newark indicate that older students and recent high school graduates who use heroin also supply the drug. These young suppliers are known to their peers and establish a market with relative ease. The National Institute on Drug Abuse-sponsored 1999 Monitoring the Future Report revealed that 73.7 percent of all tenth graders have considered trying heroin, indicating how susceptible this population is to sales from peers.

## Marijuana

Marijuana is the most readily available illegal drug in New Jersey, often used in combination with other illegal substances. Law enforcement officers in the state seize ton quantities of marijuana transported from countries such as Jamaica or Mexico, as well as domestically grown cannabis.

Mexican, Jamaican, and Caucasian criminal groups dominate the distribution of marijuana, some of which is transported in tractor-trailers from the Southwest Border to New Jersey.

Abuse

Marijuana is the most commonly abused illegal drug in New Jersey. The number of marijuana ED mentions in Newark was less than 10 per 100,000 in 1991 but increased to 43 per 100,000 by 1995.

**Table 7. Marijuana Emergency Department Mentions and Mentions Per 100,000 Newark, 1995–1998**

	Year			
	1995	1996	1997	1998
<b>Marijuana mentions</b>	<b>743</b>	<b>627</b>	<b>500</b>	<b>532</b>
<b>Mentions per 100,000</b>	<b>43</b>	<b>36</b>	<b>28</b>	<b>30</b>

Source: U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Drug Abuse Warning Network, Year End Emergency Department Data, 1998.

One-third of all drug treatment admissions in the state in 1997 reported using marijuana, although it is more frequently listed as a secondary or tertiary drug of abuse rather than the primary substance abused. Thirty-eight percent of treatment admissions reported they used the drug daily. Marijuana users in New Jersey are usually young, single, Caucasian men who never graduated from

high school and still live with their parents. More men (83%) than women (17%) were admitted to treatment for marijuana abuse in New Jersey in 1997. Of those in drug treatment in 1997, Caucasians most frequently reported using marijuana (45%), African Americans were second (37%), and Hispanics third (16%). Most marijuana users (90%) were single, over half (62%) lived with one or both parents, and over two-thirds (69%) never graduated from high school. Typically, marijuana users were younger (22 years of age) than other drug users. In 1997, most marijuana users receiving treatment (72%) were under 25 and many (43%) were under 18.

New Jersey high school students increasingly are using marijuana. In 1991 and 1999, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention surveyed over 15,000 New Jersey students in grades 9 through 12 and reported a significant increase during that period in the number of students reporting having used marijuana at least once in their lifetimes and in the month prior. Approximately 47 percent of the students surveyed in 1999 reported they used marijuana at least once, compared with 31 percent in 1991. About 26 percent of students surveyed in 1999 said they used marijuana regularly, compared with 14 percent in 1991.

Availability

Marijuana is the most readily available illegal substance in New Jersey. Law enforcement officers seized more marijuana than any other illicit drug in New Jersey between FY1995 and FY1999, according to the FDSS. (See Table 3 on page 7.) Of the 32,741 kilograms of all drugs seized by law enforcement officials in the state, 60 percent (19,672 kilograms) were marijuana. The quantity of marijuana seized during that period peaked in FY1996, and decreased substantially in FY1997,

before gradually increasing each subsequent year. Several county narcotics commanders and officials from Middlesex and Monmouth Counties reported an increase in the availability of marijuana in their areas in 2000.

Intelligence reports indicate that purchases of bulk quantities of marijuana in New Jersey are priced based on the level of THC (tetrahydrocannabinol), the chemical unique to the cannabis plant that causes psychoactive effects. “Brickweed” or

“regs” is the least potent variety of marijuana in New Jersey and is sold for approximately \$200 per pound, according to DEA. “Middies” is marijuana that has a midlevel potency, and costs about \$400 per pound in bulk. “Killer Buds” or “KBs” is the top quality marijuana, and costs \$600 per pound.

Marijuana prices are significantly higher for single pound quantities. For instance, marijuana in Camden averages \$900 per pound for regs; \$1,600 per pound for middies; and \$2,500 to \$6,000 per pound for KB. A joint containing the highest quality marijuana is called “hydro” and costs \$20 on the street. Burlington County officials reported that Killer Buds averaged \$400 to \$500 per ounce, compared with \$100 to \$150 per ounce for regular marijuana in the county.

The price of marijuana in New Jersey depends on location and quantity sold. Price variations between northern and southern New Jersey indicate two distinct drug markets in the state. (See price chart.) The distance between the distribution site and the source is one factor that might explain why prices are higher in southern New Jersey. According to DEA and the MAGLOCLLEN Regional Drug Price and Purity Report, commercial grade marijuana prices were stable per joint and ounce, but

decreased 11 percent per 1/8 ounce, 12 percent per 1/4 pound, and 14 percent per pound between August 1997 and September 1999. Sinsemilla prices increased 43 percent per joint, 18 percent per 1/8 ounce, 39 percent per ounce, 28 percent per 1/4 pound, and decreased 2 percent per pound.

**Table 8. Marijuana Prices (in Dollars), Northern and Southern New Jersey, 2000**

Weight	Northern New Jersey	Southern New Jersey
<b>Pound</b>	500 - 2,500	850 - 2,450
<b>1/2 Pound</b>	500 - 1,600	600 - 1,250
<b>1/4 Pound</b>	160 - 1,100	250 - 600
<b>Ounce</b>	85 - 400	100 - 750
<b>Gram</b>	20 - 100	10 - 30
<b>Bag</b>	5 - 40	5 - 50
<b>Blunt</b>	2 - 20	5 - 15
<b>Joint</b>	1 - 20	1 - 5

Source: Drug Enforcement Administration, Newark Field Division, *Trends in the Traffic 4th Quarter FY2000*.

## Violence

There is very little violence associated with marijuana distribution and use. Marijuana users are generally characterized as nonviolent. The effects of the drug often depend upon user expectations. While low doses of marijuana tend to induce relaxation, high doses might cause image distortion, a loss of personal identity, fantasies, and hallucinations. Marijuana is occasionally laced with other drugs, including PCP (phencyclidine). These adulterants substantially alter the effects and toxicity of the product, making it more likely that a user will become violent.

On the other hand, cannabis cultivation can lead to violence. Typically, growers cultivate cannabis outdoors, with boobytraps in and around the plants. Reports indicate traps closer to the

cultivation site are more dangerous and sophisticated and target those who might steal the cannabis. Law enforcement officials have seized two types of booby-trap devices, one intended to scare away and the other to injure or kill intruders. The first type of trap is placed on trails and paths leading to the cultivation site, but usually some distance away, and includes trip wires strung across trails, shallow holes concealed on the trails, animal traps, and electric fences. These devices discourage a hiker or sportsman from using the trail, thus preventing discovery of the cannabis. The second type of trap is generally placed closer to the cannabis, with the intent to injure or kill potential thieves or rivals. These traps include boards with exposed nails, punji pits (camouflaged pits that contain



sharp instruments meant to impale individuals who fall into the pit), fish hooks attached to tree limbs or strung on fishing line, devices designed to fire small-arms ammunition, firearms attached to trees and positioned to fire, and explosive devices ranging from blasting caps to dynamite.

Jamaican posses have been the most violent marijuana distribution groups in New Jersey and the United States since the 1980s. Jamaican marijuana distributors have frequently resorted to violence to control drug distribution markets and to control and intimidate witnesses. They tortured victims—set them on fire, shot them in the face, dismembered them, or slashed their throats. Jamaican criminal groups murdered entire families to maintain control of distribution markets in New Jersey. During the 1990s, the number of posse-related homicides dropped. Territorial conflicts diminished as posses became established. New alliances among competing posses replaced the old Jamaican political rivalry and the motive to distribute marijuana changed from funding Jamaican political parties to making a profit.

## Production

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Law enforcement officers have identified indoor and outdoor cannabis-grow operations throughout rural New Jersey. Atlantic, Cumberland, Gloucester, and Warren County authorities reported local cannabis cultivation. In response to the NDIC National Drug Threat Survey 2000, the Warren County Prosecutor's Office reported that cannabis is grown both indoors and outdoors in its area. Drug distributors often hide cannabis plants in farmers' fields by replacing corn stalks with cannabis plants or by planting the cannabis between the rows of corn.

Many cannabis plants cultivated indoors and outdoors have been seized in New Jersey. Law enforcement officers in Atlantic County seized 300 outdoor plants in August 1997. On May 26, 2000, investigators from Cumberland County eradicated the largest indoor cannabis grow ever

Gangs that distribute retail quantities of marijuana often distribute cocaine and heroin as well and commit violent crimes. Investigations of criminal organizations indicate that polydrug distributors commit murder and intimidation as a part of doing business. In response to the NDIC National Gang Survey 2000, the North Brunswick Police Department reported that gangs such as Manor for Life, OKLs, and Da Wood distribute marijuana and other drugs and commit assaults. The Hudson County Prosecutor's Office reported that gangs such as the Latin Kings and Queens, Bloods, and Ñetas, and the cultural group Five Percenters distribute marijuana and commit assaults and homicides. The Trenton Police Department reported that gangs such as the Almighty Latin Kings distribute marijuana and commit assaults. The Middlesex County Prosecutor's Office reported that the Latin Kings and Ñetas distribute heroin and commit assaults, robberies, and homicides. The Monmouth County Prosecutor's Office reported that the Eastern Hammer Skinheads distribute marijuana, carry weapons, and commit hate crimes.

discovered in New Jersey, seizing over 400 indoor plants and nearly 300 outdoor plants. On March 5, 2000, a Haddon Township man was charged with growing and selling high-grade marijuana. Police seized 70 plants (averaging \$2,000 a piece), 2 pounds of cultivated marijuana (approximately \$4,000), and equipment used to grow it. In response to the NDIC National Drug Threat Survey 2000, the Essex County Sheriff's Office reported that although it conducted 48 marijuana-related investigations, cannabis is not grown in its area. Essex County growing conditions are not suitable for outdoor cannabis cultivation, unlike the rural farmlands in southern New Jersey.

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## Transportation

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Most marijuana in New Jersey originates in Jamaica and Mexico. Mexican marijuana is smuggled across the Southwest Border in private vehicles, mail parcels, and on commercial airlines. Marijuana is transported from Jamaica to the eastern and southeastern states in commercial maritime vessels and aircraft and through express mail services. However, some Jamaican marijuana is transported in private and commercial vehicles once in the United States.

The Warren County Prosecutor's Office reported in the NDIC National Drug Threat Survey 2000 that Los Angeles, California, is the primary domestic source area for marijuana produced outside New Jersey. "Krypto," short for kryptonite, is hydroponically grown marijuana that is supplied by Philadelphia-based criminal groups who transport the drug to Atlantic City.

Although Jamaica- and Mexico-based criminal groups may be the most dominant transporters, no particular group controls the transportation of marijuana to New Jersey. In response to the NDIC National Drug Threat Survey 2000, the Essex County Sheriff's Office and Warren County Prosecutor's Office reported that local independent distributors, Caribbean and Jamaican criminal groups, and various street gangs are the primary marijuana transporters in their counties. The Bloods and Cash Money Boys are two gangs that transport large quantities of marijuana from New York City to Warren County and other areas in New Jersey.

Law enforcement agents seize more marijuana on commercial maritime vessels, particularly cargo vessels, than on commercial aircraft, but the aircraft threat is evident. Law enforcement agencies in New Jersey seized over 12,991 kilograms of marijuana from commercial maritime vessel offloads and 504 kilograms of marijuana on commercial aircraft between 1995 and 1999.

Mexican marijuana is frequently transported in multiton shipments, inside tractor-trailers from

Arizona, California, and Texas destined for New Jersey. Mexican marijuana as well as hashish has been commingled with legitimate cargo including produce, which is rarely inspected because it spoils quickly. Law enforcement officers stopped a tractor-trailer in Troup County, Georgia, and seized 550.9 kilograms of marijuana concealed under crates of frozen broccoli in May 1999. The truck originated in McAllen, Texas, and was destined for Vineland, New Jersey. In January 2000, law enforcement officers at Port Elizabeth seized 4,545 kilograms of hashish concealed in 714 cartons of wet dates. The hashish, sealed in burlap bags, was hidden between two layers of dates. The container originated in India and was shipped via Rotterdam. The consignee was a business in Montreal, Canada.

Marijuana is sometimes secreted in luggage and transported by couriers to New Jersey or concealed within small parcels sent by mail. West Coast distribution organizations commonly use express mail and commercial package delivery companies to ship marijuana to the state. The DEA Atlantic City Resident Office indicated mail shipments containing marijuana increased during the third quarter of 2000. Law enforcement officers estimate that express mail services transport about 45 kilograms of marijuana every week. In April 2000, law enforcement officers arrested key members of a large-scale Jamaican marijuana distribution organization and seized 1,955 kilograms of marijuana. This organization used an employee of an overnight package delivery service to distribute marijuana in Newark.

## Distribution

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Although Jamaica- and Mexico-based criminal groups may be the most dominant distributors, no single ethnic group controls the wholesale distribution of marijuana in New Jersey. Jamaican criminal groups or posses primarily use aircraft or maritime vessels to smuggle marijuana to the state. For example, law enforcement officers seized a Jamaica-registered vessel at the Port of Newark in December 1995 and discovered 1,000 kilograms of marijuana on board. As mentioned previously, a Mexico-based DTO attempted to transport marijuana in a tractor-trailer from Texas for distribution in New Jersey.

Local Caucasian cannabis growers also distribute marijuana at the wholesale level in New Jersey. In response to the NDIC National Drug Threat Survey 2000, the Essex County Sheriff's Office and the Warren County Prosecutor's Office reported that local independent Caucasian criminal groups are the primary wholesale distributors of domestically grown marijuana in their area.

Many different groups distribute marijuana at the retail level in New Jersey. DEA believes Bandana members and Pagan OMG members formed an alliance to finance marijuana distribution in New Jersey. In response to the NDIC National Drug Threat Survey 2000, the Essex County Sheriff's Office reported that local independent dealers dominate marijuana distribution at the retail level. The Warren County Prosecutor's Office reported that gangs such as the Bloods and Cash Money Boys dominate marijuana retail sales in its area, and African American, Dominican, or Jamaican gangs control the marijuana trade in other counties, including Camden. African American criminal groups based in New Jersey often work as street-level distributors for Jamaican and Mexican criminal groups.

At least 13 street gangs distribute marijuana in and throughout the state from Jersey City, Irvington, Camden, Atlantic City, Asbury Park, Trenton, New Brunswick, and Middlesex, according to responses from the NDIC National Street Gang Survey 2000. The Latin Kings and Ñetas reportedly distribute more marijuana than any other gang.

## Methamphetamine

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Methamphetamine poses a growing challenge for law enforcement officials in New Jersey. However, it is an insignificant threat when compared with the other major drugs. The traditional P2P (1-phenyl 2-propanone) method of producing

methamphetamine, also known as phenylacetone, is the most commonly used in New Jersey. OMGs, traditional organized crime groups (e.g., IOC), and teenagers and young adults at raves dominate methamphetamine distribution in New Jersey.

## Abuse

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Methamphetamine users at drug treatment facilities in New Jersey rarely report the drug as an abused substance; therefore, abuse data are difficult to obtain. The number of methamphetamine ED mentions and mentions per 100,000 from 1991 to 1998 were insignificant. There were fewer than 10 mentions per 100,000 in Newark, according to DAWN data.

The type of individual using methamphetamine has changed. In the past, methamphetamine use was restricted to a small group of older users and bikers. More recently, young, middle-class individuals, some of college age, have tried the drug.

## Availability

Methamphetamine is more available than it has ever been in New Jersey, but remains a low threat when compared with other major drugs. Drug intelligence sources indicate that organized crime and the popularity of raves contribute to an increase in methamphetamine availability. Methamphetamine is commonly distributed in combination with other drugs at raves. Some MDMA users in New Jersey mistakenly purchase methamphetamine believing it is MDMA.

Law enforcement officials seized at least one P2P methamphetamine laboratory a year in New Jersey between 1997 and 1999, but none in 2000. In New Jersey, only four laboratories were seized in 1997, one in 1998, one in 1999, and none in 2000. Methamphetamine laboratory seizures on the West Coast and in the midwest are far more common. For example, DEA in Arizona seized 139 laboratories in 1997, 226 in 1998, and 376 in 1999.

Roughly half of the 108 MAGLOCLLEN member agencies reported an increase in the availability of methamphetamine in their jurisdictions from 1997 to 2000. Local independent Caucasian criminal groups, OMGs, and traditional organized crime groups had more P2P available for distribution in New Jersey in 1997 after 1,000 gallons of P2P were successfully transported to the area. Law enforcement officials seized about 130 of the original 1,000 gallons, which ranged in price from \$22,000 to \$30,000 a gallon. One thousand gallons of P2P can yield 5 tons of methamphetamine.

According to the FDSS, law enforcement officers in New Jersey rarely seized kilogram quantities of methamphetamine between FY1995 and FY1999. (See Table 3 on page 7.) Of the 32,741 kilograms of all drugs seized statewide, only 5 kilograms (0.02%) were methamphetamine. Three kilograms were seized in FY1998, more than the amount seized in the other 4 years combined. Officials from Burlington, Gloucester, and Warren Counties report that methamphetamine is available in limited amounts. The New Jersey County Prosecutor's Office and

the DEA Newark Office reported that methamphetamine is more commonly available in central and southern New Jersey.

### Crystal Methamphetamine — "Ice"

In February 1999, DEA Newark arrested two Filipino nationals and seized 4 kilograms of crystal methamphetamine, the largest seizure on the East Coast. Ice is a colorless, odorless form of smokable d-methamphetamine resembling glass fragments or ice shavings. Its production (a process of recrystallizing methamphetamine) and distribution are normally associated with Asian traffickers. Crystal methamphetamine cost \$120 to \$150 per gram in FY2000.

Methamphetamine prices in New Jersey are relatively stable. Methamphetamine prices in New Jersey were stable per gram, increased 3 percent per 1/8-ounce ball, and decreased 2 percent per ounce, 12 percent per pound, and 25 percent per kilogram between August 1997 and September 1999.

Drug purity on the street decreased from 55 percent in 1999 to 49 percent in 2000, according to laboratory analysis. Purity at all distribution levels ranged from 35 to 90 percent, according to DEA and the MAGLOCLLEN Regional Drug Price and Purity Report.

**Table 9. Methamphetamine Prices (in Dollars), Northern and Southern New Jersey, 2000**

Weight	Northern New Jersey	Southern New Jersey
<b>Kilogram</b>	8,500 - 19,000	25,000
<b>Pound</b>	8,000 - 14,000	6,000 - 17,600
<b>Ounce</b>	800 - 1,500	1,000 - 1,200
<b>Gram</b>	60 - 150	80 - 110
<b>1/2 Ounce</b>	400 - 1,200	400 - 900
<b>1/8 Ounce</b>	140 - 300	125 - 200

Source: Drug Enforcement Administration, Newark Field Division, *Trends in the Traffic 4th Quarter FY2000*.



## Violence

As the number of methamphetamine users increases in New Jersey, violence and psychotic episodes will likely increase as well. Long-term methamphetamine addicts often display paranoia, experience hallucinations or mood disturbances, and have a tendency toward violence. As the euphoric effect begins to diminish, the user enters a stage called “tweaking.” It is during this stage that the user is most prone to violence, delusions, and paranoid behavior. These unpredictable and violent behaviors prompted law enforcement agencies to offer training and establish guidelines for officers encountering a methamphetamine user. Officers are advised to stay 7 to 10 feet away from the user because moving closer could be perceived as threatening. Officers also are advised not to shine bright lights at the user, who could become violent if blinded.

### Tweaking

During the tweaking stage, the user often has not slept in days and, consequently, is extremely irritable. The “tweaker” also craves more methamphetamine, which results in frustration and contributes to anxiety and restlessness. In this stage, the methamphetamine user does not need a confrontation or provocation to become violent. Case histories indicate that tweakers have reacted negatively at the mere sight of a police uniform.

In addition to the crime and violence associated with methamphetamine distribution and use, methamphetamine laboratories adversely affect the environment and endanger the lives of those who live at or near the site. Children, law enforcement

personnel, and local residents are increasingly exposed to the dangers posed by the explosive and toxic chemicals used to produce methamphetamine. In addition to the risks to people, toxic by-products of the methamphetamine production process often contaminate groundwater, soil, and buildings.

Mexican criminal groups, some prone to violence, produce most methamphetamine sold in the United States. These criminal groups blend easily with the Mexican population in New Jersey, which includes violent Mexican gangs already residing in the state. Law enforcement reports indicate that Mexican gangs are an increasing problem in northern New Jersey. Mexican gangs commit violent crimes such as drive-by shootings and assaults.

The Pagans and Breed OMGs, the most active and widely recognized methamphetamine distributors in New Jersey, are known for committing violent crimes. In response to the NDIC National Gang Survey 2000, the Trenton Police Department reported that the Pagans and Breed OMGs distribute methamphetamine in Trenton and often commit assaults and drive-by shootings. In April 1999, Pagans members allegedly assaulted patrons of a bar during a Battle of the Bands benefit, resulting in serious injury to one person. The Pagans reportedly attacked people with “Pagan walking sticks” and pool cues. The beating victims identified attackers through photographs, but feared retaliation and did not press charges. On June 12, 1999, Bound Brook Police Officers arrested a Pagans member for kidnapping, aggravated assault, and terroristic threats after he beat his girlfriend unconscious.

## Production

Methamphetamine is synthesized from precursor compounds, unlike most other commonly encountered controlled substances. Methamphetamine producers typically use one of three

precursors: ephedrine, pseudoephedrine, or P2P. Ephedrine and pseudoephedrine are alkaloids that can be extracted from Ma Huang, the ephedra plant, or synthesized from other compounds.

### Outlaw Motorcycle Gangs in New Jersey

Although six OMGs (Breed, Outcasts, Pagans, Satan's Soldiers, Warlocks, and Wheels of Soul) are known methamphetamine distributors in New Jersey, the Breed and Pagans are the most active clubs. The Breed maintains chapters in Asbury Park and Burlington, New Jersey; Bucks County, Pennsylvania; West Virginia; North Carolina; and Ohio. The Maryland-based Pagans has chapters in Elizabeth, Trenton, and South Jersey, as well as other states throughout the East Coast. Members of the Breed and Pagans own several tattoo parlors in New Jersey. Breed members also own a go-go bar. The Pagans continues to view the Hells Angels as its adversaries. The Pagans assembled a meeting with several motorcycle clubs in September 1999 to unite all New Jersey motorcycle clubs. A Breed-Pagans altercation in September 1998 at Il Bacio Tattoo Studio in Trenton, New Jersey, dissolved any alliance that once existed. During the altercation, two Breed members stabbed two Pagans. Law enforcement officers believe that these OMGs produce methamphetamine and transport it to New Jersey where other OMGs and associates distribute the drugs. OMGs distribute methamphetamine in Mercer, Ocean, and Gloucester Counties.

Source: International Outlaw Motorcycle Gang Investigators Association, *International Perspective*, September 2000.

P2P is an industrial chemical that can be synthesized only from other compounds.

The P2P process is lengthy and complicated. Various precursor chemicals are placed on a condenser in a flask. The compound in the flask is mixed, begins to react, and is left overnight. After the reaction has occurred, two layers form in the flask. The top layer is methamphetamine. To convert it to a crystal form, additional chemicals are added, heated, and then poured into chilled acetone. White crystals form and are collected for further drying.

P2P is the most common method used for producing methamphetamine in New Jersey. The P2P method is also popular in Philadelphia from

#### Methamphetamine Production Methods

**P2P.** This method requires 1-phenyl 2-propanone and aluminum combined in a complex process that produces low-quality dl-methamphetamine. It is normally associated with OMGs.

**Hydriodic acid and red phosphorus reduction.** This method is also known as the Mexican or ephedrine reduction method. The primary chemicals associated with this method are ephedrine or pseudoephedrine, hydriodic acid, and red phosphorus. It is normally used by Mexican organizations, or cooks trained by Mexicans, to produce larger amounts of d-methamphetamine.

where some methamphetamine is transported to and distributed in New Jersey. The hydriodic acid and red phosphorus reduction method may become more popular. This method produces d-methamphetamine, a drug twice as potent as dl-methamphetamine with a longer-lasting euphoric effect. The hydriodic acid and red phosphorus reduction method, popular in large-scale Mexican operations, is increasing in southern California. It may spread to New Jersey because Mexican groups already distribute heroin and cocaine and could easily blend with the Mexican population already living in the state.

New Jersey-based companies manufacture many of the precursor chemicals used by West Coast distributors to produce methamphetamine. New Jersey, with the largest number of pharmaceutical and chemical companies in the nation, is an ideal location for the exploitation of precursor chemicals. Over 300 New Jersey-based companies are registered in the state as manufacturers, importers, or distributors of regulated chemicals, including controlled substances and precursor chemicals.

Although most methamphetamine seized in New Jersey is produced in areas like Philadelphia and, to a lesser extent, the Southwest Border, some methamphetamine laboratories have been discovered in the rural counties of New Jersey. Law enforcement officers in the state have periodically seized precursors and arrested producers referred

to as cookers. On February 10, 1999, New Jersey State Police and DEA investigators seized 120 gallons of P2P from a man intending to distribute the precursor to members of the Warlocks OMG. In May 1999, local law enforcement officers arrested a man with ties to the Warlocks and Pagans OMGs for being the lead cooker in a methamphetamine production and distribution

operation in South Jersey. In response to the NDIC National Drug Threat Survey 2000, the Warren County Prosecutor's Office reported that methamphetamine laboratories exist in the county but tend to be in remote locations making detection difficult. The Essex County Sheriff's Office conducted no methamphetamine investigations and made no arrests in 1999.

## **Transportation**

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The methamphetamine that is transported to New Jersey from the Southwest Border is shipped in tractor-trailers, private vehicles, or airmail parcels routed through express mail services. Additional quantities are transported to New Jersey concealed inside private vehicles or commercial tractor-trailers traveling on Interstates 95, 80, 78,

and 76 directly from production sites in states such as Pennsylvania. Airmail and parcel service packages containing up to a pound of methamphetamine are used to transport methamphetamine. Some methamphetamine is transshipped through the state destined for Pennsylvania and states as far away as Texas.

## **Distribution**

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Traditional organized crime groups smuggle precursor chemicals from Europe and sell the precursors to OMGs and local independent, Caucasian criminal groups. Once OMGs such as the Breed, Pagans, and Warlocks produce methamphetamine, they then wholesale the drug to other biker gangs, primarily in the central and southern counties, and in states such as Pennsylvania, Ohio, West Virginia, and North Carolina. For example, the Warlocks reportedly supply methamphetamine to other biker gangs in Camden County. Teenagers and young adults also sell methamphetamine at raves.

Philadelphia-based suppliers distribute methamphetamine in central and southern New Jersey, particularly Ocean, Atlantic, and Burlington Counties. According to a U.S. Attorney report, Philadelphia-based wholesalers distribute methamphetamine in Camden as well. Most New Jersey-based distributors transport methamphetamine to Pennsylvania and as far away as Texas. In response to the NDIC National Drug Threat Survey 2000, the Essex County Sheriff's

Office and Warren County Prosecutor's Office report that methamphetamine is rarely distributed in those two counties.

DEA sources in New Jersey report that the Bandana group (technically not an OMG) and Pagans OMG actively distribute methamphetamine in Monmouth County. These two appear to have formed an alliance to finance methamphetamine distribution in the state. However, additional sources report that a Bandana member shot a Pagans member and that the two gangs no longer work together. The Bandana gang may now be working with the Breed; however, the Pagans is the more dominant methamphetamine distribution OMG in New Jersey.

In addition to distribution at the wholesale level, OMGs also retail methamphetamine in the urban areas of New Jersey. According to responses to the NDIC National Street Gang Survey 2000, the most active OMGs distributing methamphetamine in New Jersey are the Breed and Pagans. Both gangs distribute methamphetamine in Trenton and surrounding cities. The Breed also distributes

methamphetamine from Asbury Park to a predominantly Caucasian clientele. Although OMGs continue to dominate the retail distribution of methamphetamine, they eventually may be forced to compete with the expanding Mexican criminal groups.

Although Mexican criminal groups control the transportation and distribution of methamphetamine throughout most of the country, they do not control methamphetamine distribution in New Jersey. In fact, Mexican criminal groups only started to distribute methamphetamine in northern New Jersey in the late 1990s. DEA in New Jersey believes it is only a matter of time before the methamphetamine threat broadens in the state. If Mexican criminal groups continue to expand their transportation network to New Jersey, then the amount of methamphetamine available and the number of users will likely increase.

### Major Methamphetamine Ring Dismantled

On April 12, 2000, law enforcement officers arrested nine individuals and dismantled a major methamphetamine ring that distributed the drug in Pennsylvania and New Jersey. DEA conducted an 11-month probe that developed in Clementon, Pennsylvania, and centered at a hair styling salon in Philadelphia. The Philadelphia–Southern New Jersey Mafia used the salon as a front for illegal activities. Two Philadelphia-based members of this ring distributed methamphetamine to an organization based in both New Jersey and Pennsylvania that subsequently sold the drugs to undercover agents on six occasions for up to \$12,000 a pound. Officers seized 0.9 of a kilogram of methamphetamine, 3.9 kilograms of marijuana, \$193,000 in cash, and 3 firearms from this organization during the raid.

Source: Drug Enforcement Administration, Camden, 13 April 2000.

## Other Dangerous Drugs

Other dangerous drugs (ODDs), which include club drugs, stimulants, hallucinogens and diverted pharmaceuticals, have received a lower level of attention in New Jersey. However, club drugs such as MDMA, GHB (gamma-hydroxybutyrate), and ketamine, stimulants such as khat, hallucinogens such as LSD (lysergic acid diethylamide) and PCP, and diverted pharmaceuticals such as Adderall, Dexedrine, Ritalin (all stimulants), and most recently OxyContin (a narcotic) are all available and pose a growing threat in the state.

ODDs such as MDMA, GHB, and ketamine are distributed at raves, rock concerts, on college campuses, and openly in hand-to-hand exchanges. Suppliers and distributors prefer these crowded places, where they can blend easily, exchange phone numbers and set up future meetings. Many of these drugs are also distributed by parcel delivery services or through the mail.

Raves emerged in the 1990s as high energy, all-night dance parties featuring hard, pounding techno music and flashing laser lights. The parties

### Two Types of Raves

**Rave clubs** attract an underage clientele and are open two or three nights a week. Admission averages \$10 to \$12 and no alcoholic beverages are served. Bottled water and lollipops, two common items purchased by ravers using ODDs are sold at concession stands inside the clubs.

**Rave parties** are similar to rave clubs, except that they are one time events held in temporary locations. Rave parties are usually held in leased warehouses, halls, etc., where everything from disc jockeys, lighting, special effects, and security (often handled by ex-convicts) are contracted. Rave party planners typically charge \$12 to \$20 for admission.

Source: Pennsylvania Bureau of Narcotics Investigations, Club Drug Brief, 20 December 2000.

are popular in most metropolitan areas throughout the country and are typically held at permanent or temporary dance clubs set up in abandoned warehouses, open fields, or empty buildings. Raves are promoted through flyers and advertisements



distributed at clubs, in record shops and clothing stores, on college campuses, and over the Internet. However, because of increased law enforcement pressure, raves are now promoted secretly in the rave community.

Although rave promoters deny knowing that drugs are sold and used at the parties they promote, most rave club owners and promoters in New Jersey sell specialty items associated with the use of ODDs. For example, hyperthermia and teeth clenching are common side effects of MDMA abuse. Dancers attending raves purchase bottled water and sports drinks to prevent hyperthermia and dehydration, and baby pacifiers to prevent involuntary teeth clenching. Rave club

owners also sell menthol nasal inhalers, chemical lights, neon glow sticks, necklaces, and bracelets to enhance the sensory effects of MDMA.

MDMA increases a person's energy level and heightens sensory perception.

According to DEA Newark, nightclub owners with alleged ties to IOC sell ODDs in their establishments in New Jersey. Each club employs "house dealers" authorized to distribute MDMA, GHB, and ketamine, among other drugs. These drugs, often displayed "buffet style," are readily accessible or are sold one-on-one. Intelligence reports suggest that house dealers mix MDMA with ketamine, heroin, methamphetamine, GHB, or LSD and refer to them as dopey pills.

**Categories of Some Ravers**

**"Candy kids"** are low-echelon rave-goers who use ODDs and live for raves. These ravers are typically younger (13 to 18) Caucasian or Asian individuals. Candy kids are commonly from upper-middle class neighborhoods; however, those who come from broken homes or are homeless tend to distribute drugs (in addition to using the drugs) at the raves. Candy kids who are still in school tend to have poor attendance. They network at raves and on the Internet since they consider other candy kids their "family."

**"Club kids"** are former candy kids who are considered midlevel distributors. They are typically between 18 and 25 years of age, attend college, are employed, and are often female. Club kids are the "house distributors" at raves, usually distributing only one type of drug. Club kids usually select five candy kids as distributors at raves to lessen the chance of being arrested, distributing between 1,000 and 5,000 pills weekly. The candy kids earn one or two pills for their sales. Club kids usually stash larger quantities of ODDs in their cars or in the parking lot outside the club or party. Club kids dress better than candy kids, often wearing silver jewelry and nicer dress shirts and pants. They are not as flamboyant as candy kids.

**"Thugs"** are the wholesale distributors, usually Caucasian males between 30 and 40 years of age, who supply pills in quantities exceeding 10,000. They are often tied to ethnic-based criminal groups, commonly Italian and Russian. They are not users, but businessmen making a living. Thugs meet club kids at raves and offer discounted wholesale prices. The two distributors exchange pager or cell phone numbers and arrange meetings; the thug will meet the club kid halfway in a parking lot or the club kid will travel to the thug's home area.

**"Hippies,"** who may also be thugs, distribute large quantities of club drugs. Older hippies may belong to one of the "rainbow families," which are six or seven families traveling around the country selling drugs at concerts featuring hippie-type bands. Two types of hippies, "old heads" and "new heads," distribute drugs. Old heads followed particular rock groups around the country and reside in Sacramento and San Francisco. They are producers who control the wholesale distribution of LSD in the country. New heads are younger kids, often runaways or fugitives, some of whom embrace Jamaica-style dress and language. They also follow bands similar to those followed by the old heads, consume all types of drugs, and can be violent. They often meet club kids and distribute drugs at raves, concerts, and hippie festivals.

Source: Pennsylvania Bureau of Narcotics Investigations, Club Drug Brief, 20 December 2000.

## Club Drugs

### MDMA

MDMA, also called Adam, XTC, E, X, essence, M&M, and love drug, is a synthetic psychoactive drug with amphetamine-like and hallucinogenic properties. MDMA was patented in Germany in 1914 and was sometimes given to psychiatric patients to assist in psychotherapy. This practice was never approved by the American Psychological Association or the Food and Drug Administration. It is sometimes called the “hug drug” because users say it makes them feel good. However, use of the drug may cause psychological difficulties similar to those associated with methamphetamine and cocaine abuse including confusion, depression, sleep problems, anxiety and paranoia. The physical effects include muscle tension, involuntary teeth clenching, blurred vision, and increased heart rate and blood pressure.

MDMA taken in high doses is extremely dangerous, causing a marked increase in body temperature leading to muscle breakdown and kidney and cardiovascular system failure. MDMA use might lead to heart attack, stroke, and seizure as reported in some fatal cases at raves. Recent research links MDMA to long-term, possibly permanent, damage to parts of the brain that are used for thought and memory. People who develop a rash after using MDMA may risk severe liver damage or other serious side effects. For example, an Ocean County teenager died after repeated use of MDMA and several teenagers were hospitalized in critical condition after using MDMA at a rave in Morris County in 1999.

According to DEA Newark, MDMA is categorized as two types—“speedy” and “dopey”—reflecting the effect of the drug. Speedy produces a feeling of energy, which translates into the ability to party all night. Dopey makes a person lethargic, laid-back, and induces an overall vegetative state. In addition, a new drug combination is appearing at area clubs and raves. The combination is called

“EKG” and consists of MDMA, ketamine, and a small dose of GHB.

MDMA is available in most New Jersey counties and prices are stable at \$20 to \$30 per pill. (See Table 10 on page 32.) Union County officials report that MDMA is available and is often sold with steroids. Monmouth County investigators reported an increase in MDMA availability in the shore communities during summer vacations and in Essex County the remainder of the year. Ocean County investigators report that local distributors now sell 100 to 400 MDMA pills per order, whereas, in the past, purchases of over 50 pills were rare. Camden County officials report a slight increase in distribution of MDMA, as well as other club drugs in 2000, perhaps because of a rave held Memorial Day weekend at the South Jersey Expo Center in Pennsauken. Of the more than 13,000 individuals who attended, nearly 2 dozen partygoers were hospitalized.

#### **MDMA Legislation Proposed and Signed by Former Governor Whitman**

In response to ecstasy's proliferation among teenagers and young adults throughout the state, then-Governor Christine Whitman signed into legislation Bill S-1252 on July 3, 2000. This bill provides tougher penalties for MDMA distribution. Defendants now face charges similar to those for heroin and cocaine. Distributors in possession of 5 or more ounces face 20 years in prison and a fine of up to \$200,000. Sentences include up to 5 years in prison for possessing 1/2 ounce or less (less than 50 pills—third degree crime); up to 10 years for possessing between 1/2 ounce and 5 ounces (between 50 and 500 pills—second degree crime); and up to 20 years for possessing more than 5 ounces (over 500 pills—first degree crime).

Source: Drug Enforcement Administration, Newark Field Division, *Trends in the Traffic 3rd Quarter FY2000*.

The number of MDMA seizures in New Jersey increased dramatically between 1999 and 2000. USCS seized over 4 million doses of MDMA from October 1999 to March 2000, an all-time high. Law enforcement officials in New Jersey report that MDMA seizures in 2000 totaled 135.9 kilograms, surpassing 1999 seizures by 26 percent.

Most MDMA available in New Jersey is produced in the Netherlands and Belgium. Criminal groups in those countries smuggle an estimated 90 percent of the MDMA consumed in the United States, producing 1 million pills a day in mobile laboratories. The pills cost about 5 cents each to produce.

MDMA is purchased in bulk overseas and is smuggled by couriers to the United States. Israeli and Russian criminal groups distribute ODDs, particularly MDMA, to New Jersey where OMGs, teenagers, and young adults then control most of the distribution throughout the state. However, none of these groups or individuals monopolize the trade. USCS reports that IOC and Russian criminal groups continue to work with European distributors, gaining control over a significant portion of the European market. According to law enforcement officials, Russian criminal groups smuggle wholesale quantities of MDMA to Atlantic City, New Jersey.

As with most other illegal drugs, Newark International Airport is a primary smuggling hub for MDMA. A high volume of European traffic passes through the airport annually. Couriers conceal MDMA in suitcases, carry-on bags, or children's toys. On October 22, 1999, USCS arrested three Dutch nationals and seized 200,000 MDMA tablets worth \$5 million hidden in three unclaimed suitcases smuggled on a flight from Amsterdam to Newark International Airport. In March 2000, \$3 million worth of MDMA pills that were destined for Miami were seized at Newark International Airport. In another case that same month, a Dutch couple attempted to smuggle \$5 million worth of MDMA in their luggage. A 46-year-old Dutch woman attempted to smuggle 7,104 tablets of MDMA from the Netherlands to New Jersey in the bottom of her luggage on September 22, 2000.

**Table 10. Other Dangerous Drug Prices (in Dollars), New Jersey, 2000**

Type	Amount	Price Range
Anabolic Steroids	dosage unit	25
Codeine	tablet	2 – 35
Dilaudid	tablet	5 – 75
DXM	.025 kilograms	40
Ketamine	bag	20
	each per 100 hit sheet	1.50 – 3.50
	liquid vial	600
	gel cap	10 – 15
LSD	hit	.50 – 15
	each per 100 hit sheet	1.50 – 3.50
	liquid vial	600
	gel cap	10 – 15
MDMA	dosage unit/tablet	7 – 30
P-2-P Oil	gallon	25,000
PCP	bag	15 – 25
	liquid ounce	200 – 600
Percocet	tablet	2 – 5
Quaalude	tablet	5
	tablet (100+)	2
	tablet (1,000+)	1.75
Ritalin	pill	5
	500 mg red capsules	10 – 40
Rohypnol	pill	5
Seconal	each (red capsules)	2 – 3
Tylenol	each (red and blue blue-birds)	2.50 – 3
Valium	tablet (10 mg “blues”)	2 – 3
	tablet (5 mg “yellows”)	1 – 2
Vicodin	pill	3 – 5
Xanax	60 tablets	30
	100 tablets	60

Source: Drug Enforcement Administration, Newark Field Division, *Trends in the Traffic 4th Quarter FY 2000*.

Transporters also use commercial cargo vessels to smuggle MDMA to New Jersey. MDMA is easily concealed in vehicles shipped from Germany. DEA Newark received a tip that led to the discovery of nine plastic bottles containing approximately 25,000 MDMA tablets hidden in the gas tank of a

1992 BMW 750i, which arrived from Germany aboard a coastal freighter. An alleged smuggler contacted the customs contraband enforcement team in Newark to inquire about the release of the vehicle. He wanted the car shipped to Ohio, where he was later arrested.

## GHB

GHB, also known as liquid MDMA, scoop, grievous bodily harm, and Georgia home boy, is a depressant that occurs naturally in the body and is necessary for full functioning of the brain and central nervous system. Users can experience insomnia, anxiety, tremors, sweating, and coma. GHB clears from the body quickly, which makes detection by treatment providers difficult. The drug is increasingly involved in poisonings, overdoses, date rapes, and fatalities.

### GBL

GBL is converted into GHB once ingested and consequently has the same effects. GBL is a legal substance sold over the counter, and is touted as a muscle-building supplement or sexual enhancer. On January 21, 1999, the Food and Drug Administration issued a warning about food supplement products that contain GBL and requested that manufacturers recall all products containing the additive. GBL is sold in both powder and liquid form at gyms, fitness centers, and some health food stores.

Source: Drug Enforcement Administration, Newark Field Division, *Trends in the Traffic Third Quarter FY1999*.

The use of GHB and GBL (gamma-butyrolactone) caused numerous medical emergencies in New Jersey in 1999. Hospitals in the state suspect GHB caused 18 hospital admissions and 2 overdose deaths at a New Jersey university. In addition, a 16-year-old boy distributed liquid GHB to four students at Hunterdon Central Regional High School in March 2000. Three of the four students, ranging in age from 14 to 16, either lost consciousness or became ill from the substance.

GHB overdoses can occur quickly; some signs include drowsiness, nausea, vomiting, loss of consciousness, and impaired breathing. Death

can also occur. Asbury Park Police reported that approximately 30 individuals overdosed on GBL in 1999. In another case in 1999, one person died and several other individuals were treated in Ocean County, New Jersey, on Memorial Day weekend after overdosing on what they believed was GHB. The substance was actually GBL.

GHB prices remain stable according to DEA and the MAGLOCLEN Regional Drug Price and Purity Report. The Warren County Prosecutor's Office and Hunterdon County investigators reported that GHB is now available in their area and is sometimes purchased through the Internet. GHB is called verb or nooch on the street. In Atlantic City, an 8-ounce bottle costs between \$100 and \$130.

### GHB Sold Over the Internet

Two brothers residing in Trenton, New Jersey, pleaded guilty to distribution of GHB over the Internet in January 2001. They distributed GHB kits on several web sites, including clearnite.com, named because GHB is known as a "date-rape" drug. It causes loss of consciousness leaving the victim of sexual assault with little or no memory of the crime. The men distributed GHB in New Jersey and other states, earning over \$200,000.

Source: *Associated Press*, "Two Brothers Admit Selling 'Date-rape Drug' Kits Over Internet," January 2001.

Law enforcement officers at Clarks' Landing in Point Pleasant seized the largest single amount of GHB and items used to produce GHB in New Jersey in July 1998. Officers seized a single mixer, six scales, plastic scoops and lids along with 2,000 empty 4-ounce bottles, \$21,000 in cash, and 16 trays of an orange-peach colored substance (which was later determined to be 27 kilograms of GHB) in a drying rack in the garage. Two other bottles were seized in the garage containing 0.24 of a kilogram of GHB.



**Ketamine**

Ketamine, also called K, special K, vitamin K, and cat valiums, is an injectable anesthetic that is approved for both human and animal use. It is sold commercially as Ketalar. Ketamine is produced in liquid, powder, or pill form. In its liquid form, ketamine is injected intramuscularly or intravenously; by evaporating the liquid, it becomes a powder which can be pressed into tablets. In its powdered form, ketamine can be mistaken for cocaine or methamphetamine and is often snorted or smoked with marijuana or tobacco products.

At high doses, ketamine can cause delirium, amnesia, impaired motor function, high blood pressure, depression, and potentially fatal respiratory problems. Low-dose intoxication from ketamine results in impaired attention, learning ability, and memory. Short term use of ketamine causes hallucinations; its major effect is disassociation, which includes out-of-body and near-death experiences. Ketamine gained popularity among users in the 1980s when it was discovered that large doses caused reactions similar to those experienced with PCP use (see PCP section). Ketamine users in the United States and the United Kingdom have reported incidents similar

to bad LSD trips. While under the influence of the drug, users may believe they can fly or may attempt to exit moving vehicles.

Ketamine is reportedly available in at least 11 of the 21 counties in New Jersey. Law enforcement officials in Bergen County seized 55 bottles of ketamine from a distributor in April 2000.

**Ketamine Seizures**

- Law enforcement officers in Hackensack, New Jersey, arrested a man in December 2000 and seized 288 bottles of ketamine and \$4,630 in cash concealed in a duffel bag.
- Law enforcement officials in New Jersey arrested two men and seized \$3,600 worth of ketamine on January 13, 2001. The 15 individually packaged 10-milliliter bottles of ketamine were hidden inside an open burger bag in their vehicle.

Source: *The Record*, "Man Charged With Dealing Designer Drug," and "Hackensack Man Faces Drug Counts," 19 December 2000.

**Stimulants**

**Khat**

Khat, also known as qat, African salad, and Bushman's tea, is a natural stimulant found in the leaves of the *Catha edulis* plant, a flowering evergreen native to East Africa and the Arabian Peninsula. Fresh khat leaves are crimson-brown and glossy but become yellow-green and leathery as they age. The leaves contain cathinone and d-methamphetamine, but if left unrefrigerated for 48 hours after picking, the leaves contain only cathine, a form of cathinone that is less potent. The cathinone-cathine is ingested by chewing the leaves. It can produce a caffeine-like jolt and a

24-hour high. Khat was placed on the Schedule 1 Federal Controlled Substances list in 1993.

The chewing of khat leaves is common in areas where it is grown. The drug is wrapped in bouquet size bundles in banana leaves and tied for shipping. To keep them moist, the bundles are sprayed with water before they are packed into suitcases. Khat use can produce manic behavior, paranoid delusions and hallucinations, and can damage the nervous and respiratory systems. Khat use appears to be limited to an ethnic-cultural enclave consisting of immigrant communities from Arabian, East African, and Middle Eastern countries.

Law enforcement officers often seize khat at Newark International Airport, the second largest port of entry for khat, after John F. Kennedy Airport in New York. USCS seized almost 5 tons of khat at Newark International Airport from October 1999 to June 2000, compared with 1,773 kilograms of khat in FY1998. Members of the Newark Airport Interdiction Task Force made several khat seizures in the first half of 2000. On April 6, 2000,

law enforcement officers seized 98 kilograms of khat, shipped as hydraulic parts on a flight from London, England. The Airport Interdiction Team made two additional seizures in April 2000—227 kilograms in a controlled delivery and 117 kilograms a couple of days later. On June 7, 2000, the Air Cargo Team seized roughly 100 kilograms of khat manifested as cable and wiring from a flight out of London, England.

## Hallucinogens

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### LSD

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LSD, also known as acid, boomers, and yellow sunshines, is a hallucinogen that induces abnormalities in sensory perceptions. The effects of LSD are unpredictable and depend on the amount taken, the environment in which it is used, and the user's personality, mood, and expectations. Users may feel the effects within 30 to 90 minutes. The physical effects include dilated pupils, higher body temperature, increased heart rate and blood pressure, sweating, loss of appetite, sleeplessness, dry mouth, and tremors. LSD users report numbness, weakness, or trembling, and nausea is common. Two long-term disorders associated with LSD are persistent psychosis and hallucinogen persisting

perception disorder (flashbacks). LSD typically is taken by mouth and is sold in tablet, capsule, and liquid forms, and in pieces of paper saturated with the drug.

LSD is reportedly available in at least 9 of the 21 counties, and polydrug distribution is common in New Jersey clubs. In July 2000, police in Monmouth County arrested a 26-year-old man from Neptune for possession of LSD, marijuana, quaaludes, and Valium. On June 14, 2000, Sayreville Police Officers arrested six individuals at a local nightclub, including two juveniles, for ketamine and LSD violations.

### PCP

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PCP was originally developed as an intravenous anesthetic. Use of PCP in humans was discontinued in 1965 because patients who used it became agitated, delusional, and irrational. PCP, called angel dust, ozone, wack, and rocket fuel, is now illegally produced in laboratories. PCP is a white crystalline powder that is soluble in liquid and has a bitter chemical taste. It can be mixed with dyes and is available in tablets, capsules, or colored powders. PCP may be snorted, smoked, or eaten. For smoking purposes, PCP may be applied to mint, parsley, oregano, or marijuana. When combined with marijuana, the mixture is called a killer joint or crystal supergrass. Local packaging, which

includes envelopes stamped with brand names, can be mistaken for heroin.

PCP is addictive; its use often leads to psychological dependence, craving, and compulsive PCP-seeking behavior. Users cite feelings of strength, power, invulnerability and a numbing effect on the mind. At low to moderate doses, physiological effects include a slight increase in respiration and a more pronounced rise in blood pressure and pulse rate. Respiration becomes shallow, flushing and profuse sweating occur, and generalized numbness of the extremities and lack of muscle coordination may also occur. Psychological effects include distinct changes in body

awareness similar to the effects of alcohol intoxication. PCP use by adolescents may interfere with hormones related to normal growth and development and the learning process. At high doses, blood pressure, pulse rate, and respiration drop. High doses can also cause seizures, coma, and sometimes death. Long-term users may suffer memory loss, difficulties with speech and thinking, depression, and weight loss. PCP has sedative effects and when mixed with alcohol or central nervous system depressants, may lead to coma or

an overdose. PCP is reportedly available in at least 18 of the 21 counties in New Jersey.

In response to the NDIC National Drug Threat Survey 2000, the Warren County Prosecutor's Office reported that local independent distributors supply PCP, as well as GHB, LSD, and MDMA on a small scale. Because Warren County has no nightclubs, users purchase PCP at teenage parties or travel to other places to purchase the drug.

## **Diverted Pharmaceuticals**

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Diverted pharmaceuticals are a growing concern in high schools and on college campuses in New Jersey. College students in New Jersey, as well as nationwide, illegally use Adderall, Dexedrine, Ritalin (all stimulants), and most recently OxyContin (a narcotic). A 1999 study by psychiatrists at the University of Wisconsin concluded that one-fifth of college student interviewees illegally using Ritalin (methylphenidate) took it at least once and that many had experimented with other prescription drugs like Dexedrine, a stimulant. The reported increase in the illegal use of Ritalin, although anecdotal, parallels a more than eight-fold increase in the amount of methylphenidate that was manufactured between 1990 and 2000. Adderall, like Ritalin, is a drug commonly prescribed to treat Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder. Adderall is tempting to students because it is readily available. In February 2001, eight Gloucester County residents were arrested and charged with submitting fraudulent claims to health care providers and receiving thousands of

dollars in OxyContin prescriptions. Teenagers at a South Jersey school who were ordered to undergo drug testing admitted an increasing use of OxyContin.

Many college students report using or knowing someone who used prescription drugs illegally in New Jersey. Students who use prescription drugs illegally report that the drugs help them concentrate on homework or exams, stay awake during drinking nights, or achieve a new high when mixed with other drugs. Students at Princeton University reported that Percocet is being mixed with marijuana, and then smoked.

DEA sources in New Jersey report that the Pagans OMG and Bandana members joined forces to finance distribution of diverted pharmaceuticals. However, other law enforcement sources report these two no longer work together.

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## Outlook

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The availability and abuse of **powdered cocaine and crack** will continue to pose the greatest threat to the safety and security of New Jersey citizens.

Low cost, high-purity **heroin** is nearly as serious a threat, and is poised to surpass cocaine as availability and the number of abusers increase. The new user population is younger than ever and the heightened purity of heroin increases health risks.

The availability and number of users of **marijuana** remain stable but high, with no indications that this trend will change.

The presence of Mexican criminal groups will continue to grow in New Jersey over the next couple of years, significantly affecting the **heroin** and **methamphetamine** trades. These criminal groups could easily blend with ethnic Mexicans, including violent Mexican gang members, living in New Jersey. Mexican criminal groups will transport and distribute increased quantities of methamphetamine to New Jersey.

**ODDs** such as **GHB, ketamine, and MDMA** will continue to gain popularity in New Jersey, particularly among teenagers and young adults. Raves will remain popular until young individuals become aware that using ODDs brings criminal sanctions and causes illness and death.

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