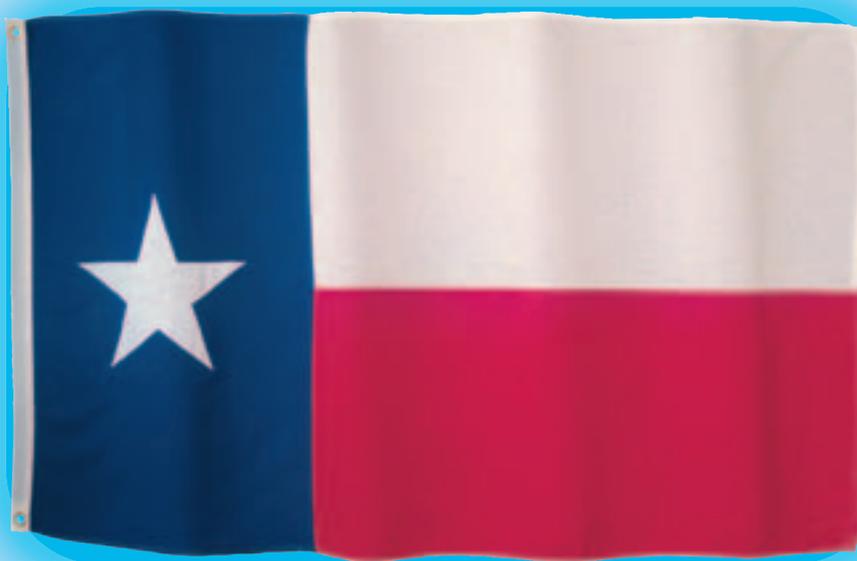




Texas

Drug Threat Assessment



National Drug Intelligence Center
U.S. Department of Justice

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Texas Drug Threat Assessment

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Preface

This report is a strategic assessment that addresses the status and outlook of the drug threat to Texas. 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 to Texas.

Texas Drug Threat Assessment

Executive Summary

Texas is a gateway for a large percentage of the illicit drugs smuggled to drug markets throughout the United States. Large quantities of methamphetamine, cocaine, heroin, and marijuana are smuggled into the state from Mexico for distribution within Texas or for eventual transport to drug markets throughout the nation. Other dangerous drugs are smuggled into Texas from Mexico as well, primarily for abuse within the state but also for regional distribution. The quantity of illicit drugs smuggled into Texas far exceeds consumption within the state; however, significant quantities of methamphetamine, cocaine, heroin, marijuana, and other dangerous drugs are abused in Texas.

Methamphetamine is a significant drug threat to Texas. High purity, low cost methamphetamine is readily available, and the drug is widely abused, particularly in rural areas. Methamphetamine produced in Mexico is the predominant type available. Locally produced methamphetamine also is available and is becoming more prevalent. Methamphetamine production in Texas is increasing, as is the number of methamphetamine laboratories being seized by law enforcement officials. Caucasian criminal groups and independent Caucasian laboratory operators produce methamphetamine in Texas. They generally produce ounce quantities using the Birch reduction method. Methamphetamine also is produced by Mexican criminal groups and independent producers as well as outlaw motorcycle gangs. Mexican drug trafficking organizations and criminal groups control most of the transportation and wholesale distribution of Mexico-produced methamphetamine. Hispanic street gangs, prison gangs, and outlaw motorcycle gangs also distribute wholesale quantities of the drug. Mexican criminal groups control most of the retail-level methamphetamine distribution in the state; however, Caucasian criminal groups as well as street gangs, prison gangs, outlaw motorcycle gangs, and various other criminal groups and independent dealers also distribute methamphetamine at the retail level.

Cocaine also is a significant drug threat to Texas. Powdered cocaine and crack cocaine are readily available and frequently abused throughout the state; however, crack cocaine is more readily available in larger metropolitan areas such as Austin, Dallas, Houston, and San Antonio. Mexican drug trafficking organizations and criminal groups dominate the transportation and wholesale distribution of powdered cocaine. They generally smuggle cocaine from Mexico into Texas through and between ports of entry along the U.S.–Mexico border, particularly in South Texas. African American, Caucasian,

Hispanic, and Mexican criminal groups; local independent dealers; outlaw motorcycle gangs; street gangs such as Black Disciples, Bloods, Crips, and Latin Kings; and prison gangs including Barrio Azteca, Hermanos de Pistoleros Latinos, Mexicanemi, Raza Unida, and Texas Syndicate distribute powdered cocaine at the retail level in Texas. Retail quantities of crack cocaine are distributed by Mexican and other Hispanic criminal groups, Caucasian and African American criminal groups, local independent dealers, street gangs, and prison gangs.

Heroin poses a considerable threat to Texas. Mexican black tar heroin and Mexican brown powdered heroin are the predominant types available throughout the state; however, South American, Southeast Asian, and Southwest Asian heroin are available to varying extents. Mexican drug trafficking organizations and criminal groups control the transportation and wholesale distribution of Mexican black tar and brown powdered heroin. Colombian drug trafficking organizations and criminal groups dominate the transportation and wholesale distribution of South American heroin, while Nigerian and other West African groups control the transportation and distribution of Southeast Asian and Southwest Asian heroin. Mexican criminal groups dominate retail-level heroin distribution in the state. However, African American, Caucasian, and other Hispanic criminal groups, local independent dealers, prison gangs, and street gangs also distribute heroin at the retail level.

Marijuana is a significant drug threat to Texas. Marijuana produced in Mexico is the predominant type available throughout the state. Locally produced marijuana is also available, although to a lesser extent. Cannabis cultivation occurs within the state, primarily in the eastern and northern regions and generally is controlled by Caucasian criminal groups and independent dealers. Mexican drug trafficking organizations and criminal groups dominate the smuggling of marijuana into Texas; they also dominate the wholesale distribution of the drug. Caucasian, Colombian, and Jamaican criminal groups; local independent dealers; prison gangs; street gangs; and outlaw motorcycle gangs also distribute marijuana at the wholesale level. Caucasian, African American, Jamaican, and Hispanic criminal groups; local independent dealers; prison gangs; and street gangs are the primary retail-level distributors of marijuana in the state.

Other dangerous drugs (ODDs) include the club drugs MDMA, GHB and its analogs, ketamine, LSD, and Rohypnol; the hallucinogen PCP; and diverted pharmaceuticals. MDMA is readily available and abused in Texas and poses a considerable drug threat to the state. Other ODDs present varying threats to Texas. Various criminal groups transport club drugs into Texas via private vehicles, commercial aircraft, couriers on foot (crossing the U.S.–Mexico border), and package delivery services. Club drugs primarily are sold and abused by middle-class, suburban teenagers and young adults at raves and nightclubs and on college campuses. PCP generally is distributed by local independent dealers throughout the state. Pharmaceuticals such as oxycodone (OxyContin), hydrocodone (Vicodin), hydromorphone (Dilaudid), alprazolam (Xanax), and cough syrup with codeine typically are diverted through a variety of techniques including pharmacy diversion, “doctor shopping,” and improper prescribing practices by physicians.

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Texas

Drug Threat Assessment

Overview

Texas is the second largest state in the country in terms of both population and land area. According to the U.S. Census Bureau, the state has more than 21 million residents; 71.0 percent are Caucasian, 11.5 percent African American, 2.7 percent Asian, 0.6 percent American Indian or Alaska Native, 0.1 percent Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander, and 14.2 percent are another race or more than one race. Thirty-two percent of the population is of Hispanic or Latino origin. The state encompasses a land area of approximately 261,914 square miles. It is composed of forests, mountains, deserts, dry plains, and humid, sub-tropical coastal lowlands.

Texas shares a 1,254-mile border with Mexico that follows the course of the Rio Grande River. This border area, a large portion of which is open and incapable of being continuously monitored by border enforcement agencies, is extensively used by drug trafficking organizations (DTOs) to smuggle illicit drugs into the United States. Significant quantities of methamphetamine, cocaine, heroin, and marijuana are smuggled from Mexico into Texas. Federal-wide Drug Seizure System (FDSS) data indicate that the quantity of drugs seized by federal law enforcement officers in Texas, most of which is seized at or near the U.S.–Mexico border, consistently exceeds that of any other state in the nation. FDSS data indicate that in 2002, Texas

Fast Facts	
Texas	
Population (2001)	21,325,018
U.S. population ranking	2nd
Median household income (2001)	\$40,860
Unemployment rate (Jan. 2003)	6.4%
Land area	261,914 square miles
Coastline	624 miles
International border	1,254 miles
Capital	Austin
Other principal cities	Dallas, El Paso, Fort Worth, Houston, San Antonio
Number of counties	254
Principal industries	Agriculture, construction, manufacturing, minerals (oil and gas), services, wholesale and retail trade

ranked first in the country in the amount of cocaine and marijuana seized by federal officers,

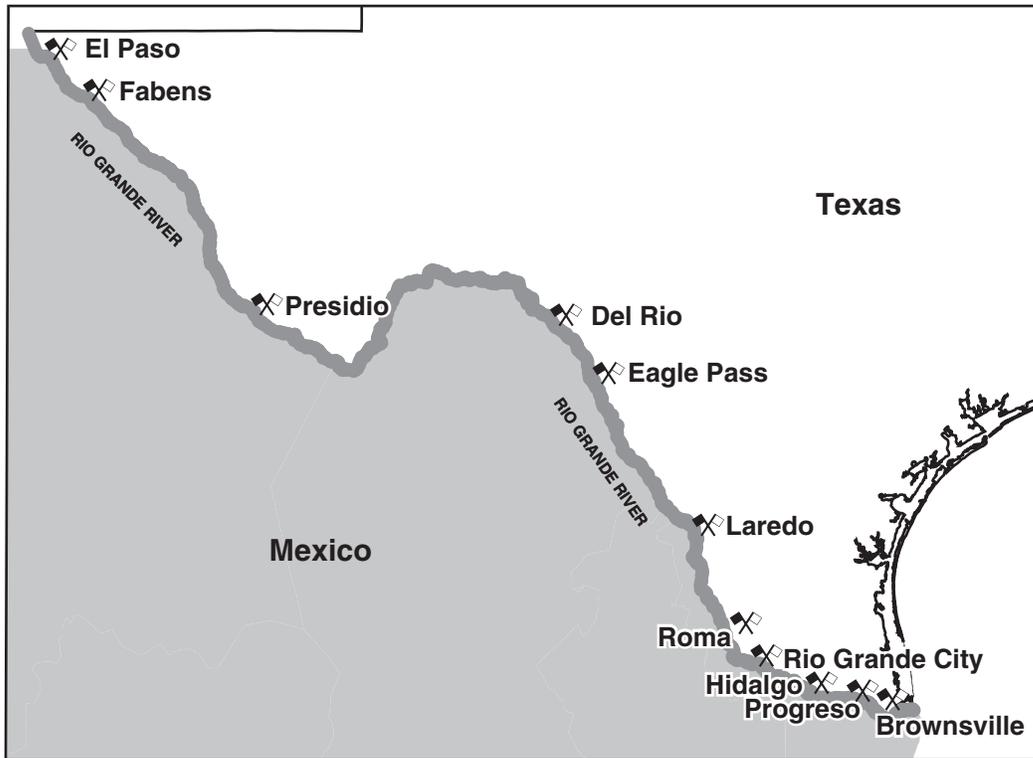


Figure 1. The eleven land ports of entry between Texas and Mexico.

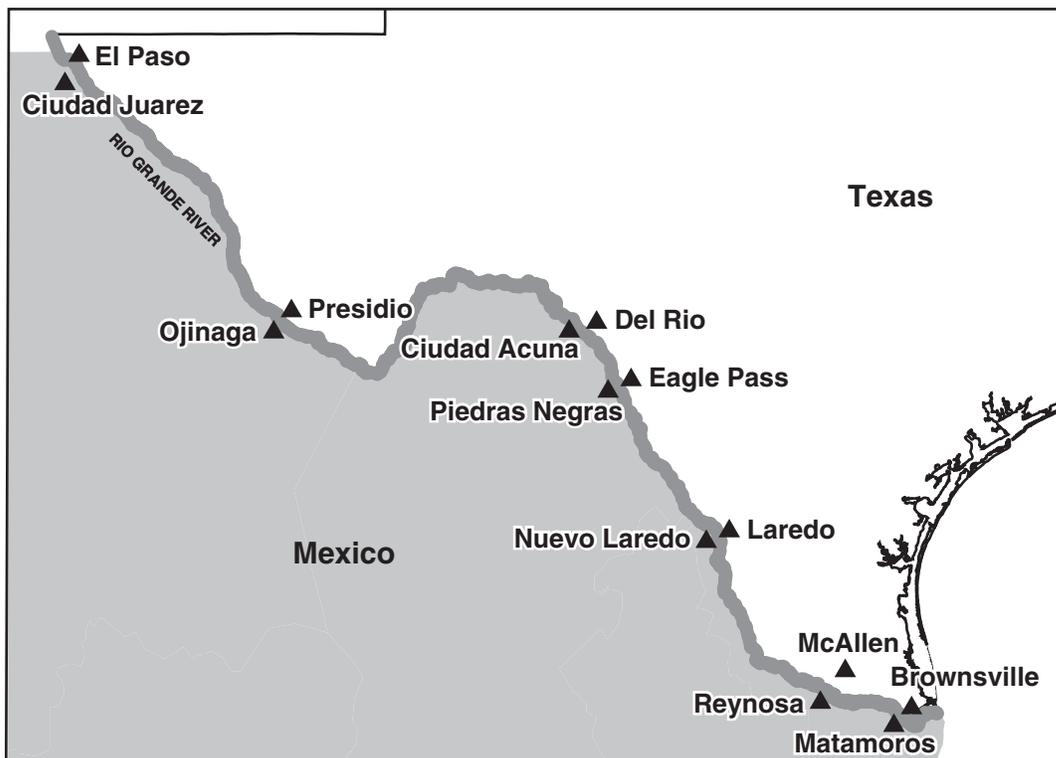


Figure 2. "Sister cities" in the United States and Mexico.

second in the amount of methamphetamine seized, and third in the amount of heroin seized. (See Table 1.) In 2002, 555,324 kilograms of marijuana were seized in Texas—more than were seized in all other states combined during that year.

Table 1. Federal Drug Seizures in Texas and Nationwide Ranking, 2002

	Kilograms Seized in Texas	Seizure Ranking Nationwide
Marijuana	555,324	First
Cocaine	17,008	First
Methamphetamine	367	Second
Heroin	291	Third

Source: Federal-Wide Drug Seizure System.

There are 11 land ports of entry (POEs) along the Texas portion of the U.S.–Mexico border including, from west to east, El Paso, Fabens, Presidio, Del Rio, Eagle Pass, Laredo, Roma, Rio Grande City, Hidalgo, Progreso, and Brownsville. (See Figure 1 on page 2.) In 2001 more than 20 million pedestrians, 51 million private vehicles, and nearly 3 million commercial trucks crossed into Texas from Mexico through these POEs. This volume of cross-border traffic facilitates illicit drug smuggling into and throughout the state.

United States and Mexico residents traveling between the “sister cities” located along the U.S.–Mexico border add to the volume of cross-border traffic. (See Figure 2 on page 2.) The sister cities in Texas and Mexico, from west to east are as follows: (the first city is in Texas, and the second is immediately across the border in Mexico) El Paso and Ciudad Juarez, Presidio and Ojinaga, Del Rio and Ciudad Acuna, Eagle Pass and Piedras Negras, Laredo and Nuevo Laredo, McAllen and Reynosa, and Brownsville and Matamoros. Residents of the United States and Mexico frequently cross the border between sister cities on personal business, and a number of U.S. residents cross the border daily to work in maquiladora plants in northern Mexico. (See text box.) DTOs and criminal groups

frequently attempt to conceal smuggling activities by crossing the border between these sister cities at peak traffic times.

Maquiladora Plants

Maquiladora plants, or maquiladoras, use duty-free materials and components from foreign suppliers to manufacture finished products such as electronics, textiles, and automobile parts that are returned to the foreign suppliers. If the finished products are exported from Mexico into the United States, duty is paid only on the products’ value-added content. There are more than 3,200 maquiladoras in Mexico employing more than 1 million individuals. Most of these plants are located close to the border. The two maquiladoras with the largest number of employees are located in Ciudad Juarez (in Chihuahua) and Tijuana (in Baja California Norte). In 2001 the number of workers employed in these two plants accounted for 40 percent of the total Mexican maquiladora workforce.

Largely because of its multifaceted transportation infrastructure and its proximity to foreign production areas, Texas is a national distribution center for illicit drugs. Drug traffickers commonly use private vehicles and commercial trucks to smuggle illicit drugs into and through the state. DTOs and criminal groups generally use Interstates 10, 20, 25, 30, and 35, as well as U.S. Highways 59, 77, 83, and 281 as primary routes for transporting drugs throughout Texas and from Texas to other regions of the country. Interstate 10 spans the entire country, connecting Texas with Los Angeles, California, in the west and Jacksonville, Florida, in the east. Interstate 20, which splits from I-10 approximately 170 miles east of El Paso, provides a direct route through Dallas to Shreveport, Louisiana; Birmingham, Alabama; and Atlanta, Georgia. The West Texas High Intensity Drug Trafficking Area (HIDTA) has identified these cities as destinations for drugs transiting western Texas. Interstate 25, which splits from I-10 approximately 40 miles west of El Paso, provides a direct route to Albuquerque, New Mexico; Denver, Colorado; and points north. Interstate 30 originates in Dallas and provides

access to eastern and northern states via other major highways that frequently are used to transport drugs. Interstate 35 extends from Laredo, located along the U.S.–Mexico border, north through the United States to northern Minnesota near the U.S.–Canada border. US 77 begins in Brownsville and extends to Waco, terminating at I-35, while US 281 originates in McAllen, passes through San Antonio and ends at I-44 in Wichita Falls. US 59 is slated for transition to I-69. If all phases of construction continue as planned, this highway will extend from the U.S.–Mexico border at Laredo to the U.S.–Canada border at International Falls, Minnesota.

Seizures of illicit drugs and drug proceeds are common on Texas highways. According to data from Operations Pipeline and Convoy (see text box), in 2000 state and local law enforcement officers in Texas seized 66,248 kilograms of illicit substances from private and commercial vehicles traveling on Texas highways. Marijuana accounted for 63,514 kilograms of the illicit substances seized on Texas highways, and most of the highway drug interdictions occurred along I-10. In 2000 law enforcement officials throughout the country reporting to Operations Pipeline/Convoy also seized more than \$15.8 million in U.S. currency destined for locations in Texas, including a seizure of \$2.7 million from a tractor-trailer traveling on US 60 destined for El Paso. The largest

Texas Highway Patrol currency seizure in 2002 occurred on November 15, when officers seized more than \$3.2 million from a rental truck traveling on US 77 in San Patricio County.

Texas has 21 international airports, which include the Dallas/Fort Worth International Airport, the El Paso International Airport, and the George Bush Intercontinental Airport in Houston. There are also more than 1,800 commercial and private airports and hundreds of private airstrips in Texas. Drug traffickers often use these airports and airstrips to smuggle illicit drugs into the state. Moreover, traffickers establish clandestine airstrips on either side of the U.S.–Mexico border to further facilitate their drug smuggling efforts. The Air and Marine Interdiction Coordination Center (AMICC), which uses radar to track aircraft approaching the U.S.–Mexico border, reports that aircraft often fade from radar near the border and appear to land at airports, airfields, and remote locations in Mexico. Many fades are indicative of traffickers moving drugs to locations near the border and offloading the shipments into vehicles for smuggling overland into Texas. According to AMICC, drugs typically are seized by U.S. or Mexican authorities at or near the fade area within 72 hours after fade activity is noticed on radar. Occasionally, pilots land at remote locations in Texas, including abandoned airstrips or long stretches of highways.

Operations Pipeline, Convoy, and Jetway

Operation Pipeline is a national highway interdiction program supported by the El Paso Intelligence Center (EPIC). Drug seizures from private vehicles are reported to Operation Pipeline primarily by state and local law enforcement agencies operating nationwide along the highways and interstates most frequently used to transport illegal drugs and drug proceeds.

Operation Convoy is an EPIC-supported highway interdiction program involving commercial vehicles. Drug seizures are reported to Operation Convoy by participating state and local law enforcement agencies that seize drugs from commercial vehicles along major U.S. highways.

Operation Jetway is an EPIC-supported domestic interdiction program. Drug seizures are reported to Operation Jetway by federal, state, and local law enforcement agencies across the nation at airports, train stations, bus stations, package shipment facilities, U.S. Post Offices, and airport hotels and motels.

Commercial shipping is prevalent in the Gulf of Mexico, presenting an additional threat of drug smuggling to the state. The Port of Houston is Texas' principal port on the Gulf of Mexico and in 2000 ranked first nationally in volume of foreign trade. It also ranked first among the Gulf of Mexico ports in the number of processed shipping containers; more than 1,057,869 twenty-foot equivalent units (TEUs) of container traffic were processed at the Port of Houston during 2001, a 9 percent increase from 1999 when 968,530 TEUs were processed. The Rio Grande River and Texas' Intracoastal Waterway also are vulnerable to drug trafficking. The Rio Grande flows for 1,885 miles from southwestern Colorado to the Gulf of Mexico. It passes through New Mexico and forms a natural boundary between Mexico and Texas. Traffickers often float bundles of marijuana across the river, or they walk, swim, or drive shipments across in low-water crossing areas. Texas' Intracoastal Waterway system extends 426 miles from Sabine Pass to the mouth of the Brownsville Ship Channel at Port Isabel, enabling traffickers to use small vessels and pleasure craft to transport illicit drugs into and from southern Texas.

Illicit drugs also are smuggled into and through Texas via commercial aircraft, buses, passenger trains, and package delivery services. Operation Jetway data (see text box on page 4) indicate that in 2000, law enforcement officers in Texas seized 12,341 kilograms of illicit substances that were transported (or intended for transport) aboard commercial aircraft, buses, trains, or via package delivery services. The amount of marijuana seized as part of Operation Jetway (11,659 kg) accounted for 94 percent of the illicit substances seized as part of the program in 2000.

Traffickers also smuggle illicit drugs by rail across the Texas portion of the U.S.–Mexico border; however, according to EPIC, the extent to which DTOs and criminal groups use railcars to smuggle drugs across the U.S.–Mexico border is a significant intelligence gap. Northbound railcar crossings into Texas from Mexico increased 45 percent from 145,112 in 1997 to 211,023 in 2001.

Moreover, there are five rail-only bridges along the Texas portion of the U.S.–Mexico border. These bridges, located at Brownsville, Eagle Pass, El Paso, Laredo, and Presidio, handle approximately 80 percent of the rail traffic that enters the United States from Mexico.

Mexican DTOs and criminal groups are the dominant transporters of illicit drugs into Texas. They also control the wholesale, midlevel, and retail distribution of drugs in the state. These DTOs and criminal groups use familial ties and extensive connections among organizations and groups to transport and distribute significant quantities of methamphetamine, cocaine, heroin, and marijuana throughout Texas. Various other DTOs, criminal groups, outlaw motorcycle gangs (OMGs), street gangs, prison gangs, and local independent dealers also transport significant quantities of illicit drugs into the state for distribution.

Public health data indicate that drug-related treatment admissions in Texas increased from 1998 through 2002. According to the Texas Commission on Alcohol and Drug Abuse (TCADA), the number of adult (18 and over) drug-related treatment admissions (not including alcohol) to publicly funded facilities in the state increased from 22,049 in 1998 to 27,530 in 2002. Of the 27,530 adult admissions, 4,191 were for marijuana, 3,280 were for powdered cocaine, 8,984 were for crack, 3,186 were for amphetamine/methamphetamine, 5,127 were for heroin, 75 were for MDMA, and the remaining 2,687 admissions were for other illicit and licit drugs, not including alcohol.

Despite increased drug treatment admissions, survey data indicate that the percentage of Texas residents who reported having abused an illicit drug was lower than the percentage nationwide. According to combined data from the 1999 and the 2000 National Household Survey on Drug Abuse (NHSDA), 4.9 percent of Texas residents aged 12 and older reported having abused an illicit drug in the month prior to the survey, compared with 6.3 percent nationwide.

Drug-related crimes have increased in Texas. The number of arrests in the state for the possession or sale of illicit drugs increased from 1997 through 2001, according to the Texas Department of Public Safety (DPS). In 1997 there were 9,414 arrests for the sale of illicit drugs and 88,932 arrests for the possession of illicit drugs. In 2001 there were 10,034 arrests for the sale of illicit drugs and 93,888 arrests for the possession of illicit drugs.

According to the U.S. Sentencing Commission (USSC), in fiscal year (FY) 2001, 47 percent of the federal sentences in Texas were for

drug-related offenses—higher than the national rate of 41 percent. Marijuana offenses accounted for the majority (64%) of the drug-related federal sentences in the state in FY2001.

Illicit drug abuse has a significant impact on the state's economy. According to estimates published by TCADA in January 2003, abuse of illicit drugs cost the state \$9.5 billion in 2000. These costs include actual or estimated costs for drug treatment and care, reduced or lost productivity, crime, premature death, law enforcement, property damage, motor vehicle accidents, and social welfare administration costs.

Methamphetamine

Methamphetamine is a significant drug threat to Texas. High purity, low cost methamphetamine is readily available, and the drug is widely abused, particularly in rural areas. Methamphetamine produced in Mexico is the predominant type available. Locally produced methamphetamine also is available and is becoming more prevalent. Methamphetamine production in Texas is increasing, as is the number of methamphetamine laboratories being seized by law enforcement officials. Caucasian criminal groups and independent Caucasian laboratory operators produce methamphetamine in Texas. They generally produce ounce quantities using the Birch

reduction method. Methamphetamine also is produced by Mexican criminal groups and independent producers as well as OMGs. Mexican DTOs and criminal groups control most of the transportation and wholesale distribution of Mexico-produced methamphetamine. Hispanic street gangs, prison gangs, and OMGs also distribute wholesale quantities of the drug. Mexican criminal groups control most of the retail-level methamphetamine distribution in the state; however, Caucasian criminal groups as well as street gangs, prison gangs, OMGs, and various other criminal groups and independent dealers also distribute methamphetamine at the retail level.

Abuse

Methamphetamine abuse is high in Texas, according to law enforcement agencies throughout the state. Many agencies report that the level of methamphetamine abuse is rising in their jurisdictions and that Caucasians appear to be the primary abusers. Further, in response to the National Drug Intelligence Center (NDIC) National Drug Threat Survey (NDTS) 2002, 47 percent of the 156 law enforcement respondents in Texas who rated the level of methamphetamine abuse in their jurisdictions reported high levels of abuse, and 30 percent reported medium levels of abuse.

Methamphetamine-related admissions to publicly funded treatment facilities are increasing. According to TCADA, amphetamine and methamphetamine-related adult admissions to publicly funded treatment programs increased from 7 percent of drug admissions in 1998 to 12 percent in 2002. There were 1,672 amphetamine/methamphetamine-related admissions in 1998; 1,510 in 1999; 2,629 in 2001; and 3,186 in 2002. In 2002 Caucasians accounted for the largest percentage of these admissions (92%), followed by Hispanics (6%), and African Americans (1%).

NDIC National Drug Threat Survey

The National Drug Threat Survey (NDTS) 2002 was administered by NDIC to a representative sample of state and local law enforcement agencies throughout the United States to assess the availability, abuse, and overall threat posed by all major drugs. NDIC received 2,906 survey responses from law enforcement agencies, an overall response rate of 80 percent. Survey respondents were asked to rank the greatest drug threats to their areas and to indicate the level of availability for each major drug type. They also were asked to provide information on specific groups involved in the transportation and distribution of illicit drugs. Responding agencies also provided narrative assessments of various aspects of the overall drug situation and the threat that specific drugs posed to their areas. Survey responses are used by NDIC to substantiate and augment drug threat information obtained from other federal, state, and local law enforcement agencies.

Methamphetamine also is abused by adolescents in Texas. According to TCADA, amphetamine/methamphetamine accounted for 2.3 percent of the 5,178 youth drug treatment admissions (excluding alcohol) to TCADA-funded treatment programs in 2002, an increase from 1.5 percent the previous year. The average age at which youths were admitted to treatment for amphetamine/methamphetamine abuse was 16. Caucasians accounted for the largest percentage of these admissions (80%), followed by Hispanics (12%), and African Americans (2%).

The number of amphetamine/methamphetamine emergency department (ED) mentions in the Dallas metropolitan area increased from 422 in 1997 to 489 in 2001, according to the Drug Abuse Warning Network (DAWN). In 2001 the rate of amphetamine/methamphetamine mentions per 100,000 population in the Dallas metropolitan area (16) was higher than the rate nationwide (13). (Dallas is the only city in Texas that reports ED data to DAWN.)

DAWN Emergency Department and Mortality Data

DAWN emergency department data for the Dallas metropolitan area represent estimates of drug mentions in the Dallas metropolitan area based on data provided by hospitals in Collin, Dallas, Denton, Ellis, Kaufman, and Rockwall Counties.

DAWN mortality data for the Dallas metropolitan area represent drug deaths in Collin, Dallas, Denton, Ellis, and Kaufman Counties. These five counties account for 94 percent of the metropolitan area population. Henderson, Hunt, and Rockwall Counties, which account for the remaining 6 percent of the metropolitan area population, did not report mortality data to DAWN.

DAWN mortality data for the San Antonio metropolitan area represent drug deaths in Bexar County, which accounts for 87 percent of the metropolitan area population. Comal, Guadalupe, and Wilson Counties, which account for the remaining 13 percent of the metropolitan area population, did not report mortality data to DAWN.

According to TCADA, 17 amphetamine/methamphetamine-related deaths occurred in Texas in 1997; 20 in 1998; 21 in 1999; 39 in 2000; and 51 in 2001. DAWN mortality data indicate that the number of deaths in which methamphetamine was a factor increased in both Dallas and San Antonio from 1997 through

Arrestee Drug Abuse Monitoring Program

The ADAM Program involves two components, a questionnaire administered by a trained interviewer to an arrestee in a booking facility and a urine sample collected from the arrestee within 48 hours of arrest. In 2001 data were collected for 33 metropolitan areas across the United States. ADAM data for Dallas, San Antonio, and Laredo were collected from randomly selected arrestees at four facilities in Dallas County, two facilities in Bexar County, and one facility in Webb County.

Texas Drug Threat Assessment

2001. Methamphetamine-related deaths increased from 18 in 1997 to 37 in 2001 in the Dallas metropolitan area and from 8 to 18 in the San Antonio metropolitan area. (Disparities in mortality data are likely a result of differences in data collection and reporting.)

The number of calls to Texas Poison Control Centers has increased from 220 calls in 1998 to 282 in 1999, 393 in 2000, 451 in 2001, then decreased to 392 in 2002.

In 2001 methamphetamine was detected in only a small percentage of adult male arrestees in Dallas, Laredo, and San Antonio. According to the Arrestee Drug Abuse Monitoring (ADAM) program, 1.7 percent of adult male arrestees tested positive for methamphetamine use in Dallas during 2001, and 2.6 percent tested positive in San Antonio. No adult male arrestees tested positive for methamphetamine use in Laredo during 2001.

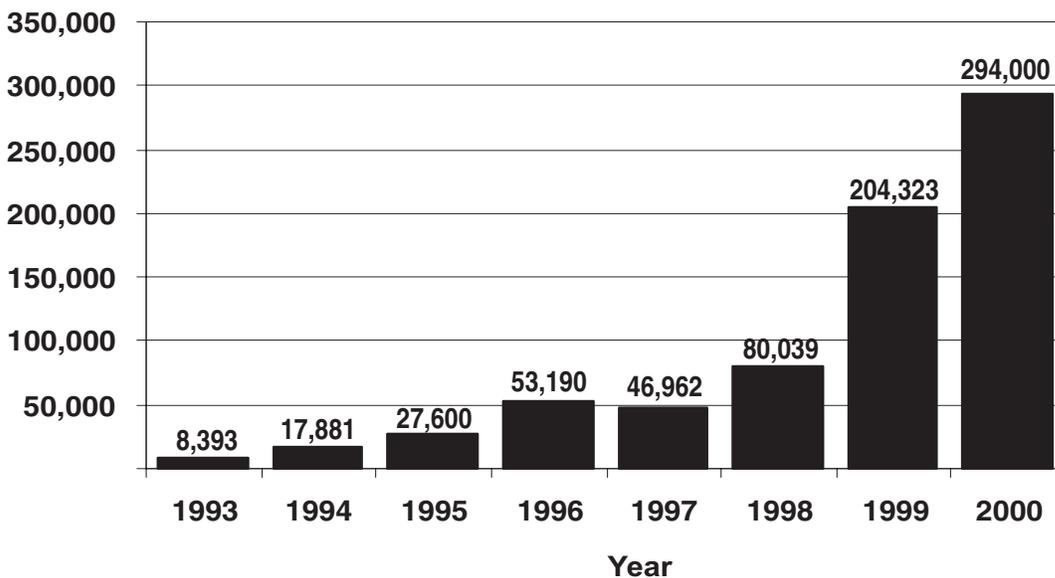
Availability

Methamphetamine is readily available throughout Texas. Of the 162 law enforcement respondents to the NDTs 2002 in Texas who rated the level of methamphetamine availability in their jurisdictions, 80 percent reported that methamphetamine was readily available. Methamphetamine produced in Mexico is the most dominant type; however, methamphetamine produced in Texas, California, and other southwestern states is available to varying degrees throughout the state. In addition, high purity crystal methamphetamine, commonly known as ice or glass, is becoming increasingly available throughout northern and eastern Texas.

Seizure data indicate the ready availability of methamphetamine in Texas. According to FDSS data, federal law enforcement officers in Texas seized 265 kilograms of methamphetamine in 1998, 381 in 1999, 622 in 2000, 452 in 2001, and 367 kilograms in 2002. In 2002 Texas ranked second in the nation for the quantity of methamphetamine seized. (See Table 1 on page 3.)

As further indication of the ready availability of methamphetamine, Texas DPS laboratories have analyzed increasing amounts of the drug. For example, Texas DPS laboratories analyzed 294,000

Chart 1. Methamphetamine Analyzed by Texas DPS Laboratories, in Grams, 1993–2000



Source: Texas Department of Public Safety.

Percentage of Items Analyzed by DPS Laboratories in 2002 That Were Methamphetamines or Amphetamines

Hidalgo (McAllen)	0.42
Webb (Laredo)	0.83
El Paso (El Paso)	5.39
Nueces (Corpus Christi)	9.03
Harris (Houston)	7.21
Travis (Austin)	19.06
McLennan (Waco)	20.69
Smith (Tyler)	23.62
Dallas (Dallas)	34.27
Midland (Odessa)	14.54
Taylor (Abilene)	46.30
Lubbock (Lubbock)	25.00
Potter (Amarillo)	46.66

In Amarillo in the Texas Panhandle, 47 percent of all the drug items examined by the DPS laboratory were either methamphetamines or amphetamines, while in McAllen and Laredo, less than 1 percent were these substances. Laboratories in the northern part of the state are also more likely to report analyzing substances that turned out to be ammonia or pseudoephedrine, which are chemicals used in the manufacture of methamphetamine.

Source: Texas Department of Public Safety.

grams of methamphetamine in 2000, compared with only 8,393 grams in 1993. (See Chart 1 on page 8.)

The percentage of drug-related federal sentences that were methamphetamine-related in Texas was lower than the national percentage in FY2001, despite a dramatic increase in the number of methamphetamine-related federal sentences in the state. According to USSC data in FY2001, 7 percent of drug-related federal sentences in Texas were methamphetamine-related compared with 14 percent nationally. Methamphetamine-related federal sentences in Texas more than doubled from 154 in FY1997 to 326 in FY2001.

In FY2002 methamphetamine prices throughout Texas varied depending on the location of sale and the amount purchased. DEA reported that

wholesale quantities of Mexico-produced methamphetamine sold for \$5,800 to \$9,000 per pound in Dallas, \$10,600 per pound in El Paso, and \$6,000 to \$11,000 per pound in Houston. Prices for ounce and gram quantities of methamphetamine also varied throughout the state. Methamphetamine sold for \$400 per ounce in Dallas, \$960 per ounce in El Paso, and \$500 to \$800 per ounce in Houston. Methamphetamine sold for \$70 to \$100 per gram in Dallas and \$90 per gram in El Paso. Law enforcement agencies in Texas, including DEA, HIDTAs, and local task forces, reported that the purity of methamphetamine ranged from as low as 17 percent to as high as 90 percent during FY2002. Crystal methamphetamine price and purity data are not reported for Texas; however, in other states the purity of crystal methamphetamine typically is greater than 80 percent and often exceeds 90 percent.

Law enforcement officials in Texas report that crystal methamphetamine is increasingly available in Dallas and Houston. According to the DEA Houston Division, crystal methamphetamine is being sold in nightclubs in Houston. Officers from the Austin Police Department also report that the availability of crystal methamphetamine recently has increased in its jurisdiction, and they believe the drug is being produced locally.

Large Crystal Methamphetamine Seizure in Dallas County

On May 7, 2003, officers from the Dallas County Sheriff's Office, Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE)—formerly U.S. Customs Service—and the North Texas HIDTA seized 24 pounds of crystal methamphetamine and arrested three individuals in North Dallas. Twenty-two pounds of the drug were seized from a vehicle occupied by two of the suspects, and an additional pound was concealed under the backseat of another vehicle driven by a third suspect. Authorities seized another pound from a storage unit associated with the individuals. Authorities indicate that the crystal methamphetamine was produced in Mexico or South Texas and transported into Dallas County in a private vehicle.

Source: Bureau of Customs and Border Protection.

Violence

Methamphetamine-related violence poses a significant threat to Texas. Violence is more commonly associated with the production, distribution, and abuse of methamphetamine than with any other illicit drug. Methamphetamine is a powerful stimulant that affects the central nervous system and can induce anxiety, insomnia, paranoia, hallucinations, mood swings, delusions, and violent behavior, particularly during the “tweaking” stage of abuse. (See text box.)

Tweaking

As the euphoric effects of methamphetamine diminish, abusers enter the tweaking stage in which they are prone to violence, delusions, paranoia, and feelings of emptiness and dysphoria. 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. At this stage methamphetamine users may become violent without provocation. Case histories indicate that tweakers have reacted violently to the mere sight of a police uniform.

Prison gangs are involved in the distribution of methamphetamine in Texas, and they display a propensity for violence, particularly in safeguarding their drug operations. Members of Texas Mafia, a Caucasian gang that operates within and

outside Texas prisons, have committed robbery, burglary, and theft to obtain funds to expand their methamphetamine distribution activities. Members of Texas Mafia (see text box) also reportedly have been involved in homicides, including inmate homicides. In addition, members of Texas Mafia maintain a close association with the Texas Syndicate prison gang and reportedly have engaged in “contract killings” on its behalf.

Texas Mafia and Texas Syndicate

The Texas Mafia prison gang was formed in Texas prisons in the early 1980s and is composed predominantly of Caucasian inmates and ex-convicts. Many members are drug users who frequently engage in methamphetamine distribution. Members have close associations to the Texas Syndicate prison gang as well as OMGs.

The Texas Syndicate prison gang distributes methamphetamine, cocaine, and heroin throughout Texas and within the state’s penal system. The majority of its members are Mexican Americans who are incarcerated in Texas; however, members also include individuals from Latin American countries, such as Colombia and Mexico, who likewise are imprisoned in Texas. Incarcerated members and those who have been released from prison control the gang’s drug distribution activities in prisons and on the street.

Production

Most of the methamphetamine available in Texas is produced in Mexico by Mexican DTOs and criminal groups. However, methamphetamine production occurs in Texas and is increasing throughout the state. According to EPIC’s National Clandestine Laboratory Seizure System (NCLSS), federal, state, and local law enforcement authorities in Texas seized 502

methamphetamine laboratories in 2002, an increase from 422 in 2001 and 255 in 2000.

Methamphetamine laboratories are located throughout the state, particularly in rural and moderately populated areas of western Texas and the border region. Law enforcement officials report that they regularly seize methamphetamine

and methamphetamine laboratories throughout the state. Criminal groups and individuals operating in these areas establish secluded laboratory sites which enable them to avoid law enforcement detection and easily dispose of hazardous waste. In addition, law enforcement reporting indicates that methamphetamine production is increasing in rural areas in eastern Texas as well as in urban areas such as Austin, Dallas, Fort Worth, Houston, McAllen, and San Antonio.

Methamphetamine producers also increasingly are using hotel or motel rooms for methamphetamine production, which poses a danger to individuals in surrounding rooms or buildings. Some hotels and motels have centralized air ventilation systems through which poisonous vapors and gases from methamphetamine laboratories can spread to other rooms via ductwork. Moreover, methamphetamine laboratories are an extreme fire risk. The DEA Dallas Division reports an

increase in motel fires that they believe may be related to the production of methamphetamine.

Methamphetamine laboratories in Texas are generally small and yield ounce quantities of the drug. Most methamphetamine laboratories are operated by Caucasian criminal groups and independent Caucasian producers. Mexican criminal groups and OMGs also produce methamphetamine in the state, although to a lesser extent. These groups use ephedrine/pseudoephedrine reduction methods (see text box), primarily the Birch reduction method, to produce methamphetamine. Birch reduction laboratories are becoming more common throughout the state. The Central East Texas Narcotics Task Force reports that Birch reduction laboratories are increasingly common in its jurisdiction because of the ready availability of precursor and essential chemicals, most of which can be purchased over the counter from local stores.

Methamphetamine Production Methods

Ephedrine/Pseudoephedrine Reduction:

- **Hydriodic acid/red phosphorus.** The principal chemicals are ephedrine or pseudoephedrine, hydriodic acid, and red phosphorus. This method can yield multipound quantities of high quality d-methamphetamine and often is associated with Mexican DTOs and criminal groups.
- **Iodine/red phosphorus.** The principal chemicals are ephedrine or pseudoephedrine, iodine, and red phosphorus. The required hydriodic acid in this variation of the hydriodic acid/red phosphorus method is produced by the reaction of iodine in water with red phosphorus. This method yields high quality d-methamphetamine.
- **Iodine/hypophosphorous acid.** The principal chemicals are ephedrine or pseudoephedrine, iodine, and hypophosphorous acid. The required hydriodic acid in this variation of the hydriodic acid/red phosphorus method is produced by the reaction of iodine in water with hypophosphorous acid. Known as the hypo method, this method yields lower quality d-methamphetamine. Hypophosphorous acid is more prone than red phosphorus to cause a fire and can produce deadly phosphine gas.
- **Birch.** The principal chemicals are ephedrine or pseudoephedrine, anhydrous ammonia, and sodium or lithium metal. Also known as the Nazi method, this method typically yields ounce quantities of high quality d-methamphetamine and often is used by independent dealers and producers.

Phenyl-2-propanone:

- **P2P.** The principal chemicals are phenyl-2-propanone, aluminum, methylamine, and mercuric acid. This method yields lower quality dl-methamphetamine and traditionally was associated with OMGs.

Crystal methamphetamine conversion laboratories also have been encountered in Texas. According to law enforcement officials, Mexican criminal groups are becoming increasingly involved in the conversion and distribution of crystal methamphetamine in Texas.

Crystal Methamphetamine Conversion

The conversion of powdered methamphetamine to crystal methamphetamine involves dissolving d-methamphetamine powder in a solvent such as denatured alcohol. Evaporation of the solvent yields crystals that resemble glass shards or ice shavings. This “washing” technique removes impurities, resulting in methamphetamine with longer-lasting physical effects and purity levels above 80 percent.

The ready availability of precursor chemicals and reagents used in methamphetamine production contribute to the threat posed by methamphetamine. Laboratory operators in the state commonly extract ephedrine or pseudoephedrine from cold pills and other over-the-counter medications and purchase other chemicals such as iodine, lithium, and ether from businesses that distribute these products for legitimate purposes. Methamphetamine producers in Texas also obtain large quantities of precursor and essential chemicals in Mexico. They typically smuggle these chemicals through the Texas POEs in private vehicles. They also smuggle or transport chemicals into Texas by bus, train, commercial and private aircraft, package delivery services, and couriers on foot.

Methamphetamine producers in the state also steal anhydrous ammonia, a common farm fertilizer, from farm supply stores and farmers’ fields. Anhydrous ammonia generally is stored in mobile tanks that contain 400 to 1,000 gallons of the chemical. Methamphetamine laboratory operators often steal the chemical by siphoning it from the tanks. They also purchase illegally diverted anhydrous ammonia for as much as \$500 per gallon. When purchased from legitimate suppliers, anhydrous ammonia sells for approximately 50 cents per gallon.

Ephedrine Concealed in Ice Cubes

CBP officials in El Paso and the Montgomery County Sheriff’s Office report that Mexican DTOs and criminal groups have attempted to smuggle ephedrine into the United States by dissolving it in water, freezing the solution into ice cubes, and mixing the cubes with beverages in insulated coolers. Once the smugglers cross the border, the ice is melted and the water evaporated to extract the ephedrine.

Source: Bureau of Customs and Border Protection; Montgomery County Sheriff’s Office.

Methamphetamine production poses serious safety and environmental threats to Texas. The production process creates toxic and hazardous waste that endangers law enforcement personnel, emergency response teams, children (particularly those who reside in the homes of methamphetamine producers), and the environment.

Anhydrous Ammonia Theft and Diversion

Farmers use anhydrous ammonia as a fertilizer. Methamphetamine laboratory operators often divert anhydrous ammonia from large storage tanks located on farm fields or at farm supply stores by using garden or vacuum hoses to siphon the chemical into open containers or empty propane cylinders. Thefts from farms and agricultural supply stores have become so frequent in some agricultural areas of the United States that security measures increasingly are being employed. These measures include alarms, surveillance cameras, barricades, fencing, motion detectors, and special locks on tank valves.

Transportation

Seizure data indicate that Texas is becoming a key entry point for methamphetamine produced in Mexico. EPIC data indicate that the amount of methamphetamine seized in Texas within 150 miles of the U.S.–Mexico border increased from 263 kilograms in 1999 to 386 kilograms in 2002—the second-highest quantity seized among border states. (See Table 2.) Although shipments of methamphetamine interdicted at the border typically are in small quantities, there have been some large seizures. On April 8, 2002, U.S. Border Patrol (USBP) agents monitoring the Rio Grande River near Roma, Texas, seized more than 21 pounds of methamphetamine and 1,260 pounds of marijuana from an abandoned truck. Other large methamphetamine seizures at or near the border include 42 pounds seized from a sport-utility vehicle at the Eagle Pass POE on August 28, 2002; approximately 49 pounds seized from a private vehicle at the Hidalgo POE on September 2, 2002; and 27 pounds seized from a pickup truck at a checkpoint on US 54 on October 24, 2002.

Most of the methamphetamine available in Texas is smuggled into the state from Mexico by Mexican DTOs and criminal groups. These DTOs and criminal groups smuggle the drug in private and commercial vehicles using a variety of concealment methods. According to Texas DPS, concealment locations include gas tanks, consoles, front doors, quarter panels, and toolboxes.

Methamphetamine also is transported into the state from California and other southwestern states, although to a lesser extent than from Mexico. Caucasian criminal groups and independent dealers who produce methamphetamine in Texas also transport the drug throughout the state.

Methamphetamine from Mexico commonly is transported from border areas to primary market areas via I-10, I-20, and I-35. The North Texas HIDTA reports that methamphetamine traffickers use I-35 as a primary route for transporting the drug to destinations in Texas as well as in northern and eastern states. Traffickers also use I-40, an east-west route, to transport methamphetamine through the state. In January 2002 Texas DPS officers seized more than 500 grams of methamphetamine from a private vehicle on I-40 in Wheeler County, east of Amarillo. Moreover, law enforcement agencies in western Texas report that methamphetamine is transported from California on I-40 through Arizona, New Mexico, and northern Texas. Some methamphetamine from California also is transported through Texas en route to other states, particularly Oklahoma, Arkansas, Louisiana, and other southeastern states. Operation Pipeline/Convoy data indicate that state and local law enforcement officers have seized a significant amount of methamphetamine on Texas highways. State and local law enforcement officers in Texas seized 74 kilograms of methamphetamine from private and

Table 2. Methamphetamine Seizures Within 150 Miles of the U.S.–Mexico Border, in Kilograms, 1999–2002

	1999	2000	2001	2002
Arizona	60	173	367	312
California	691	659	681	503
New Mexico	40	27	10	34
Texas	263	531	314	386

Source: El Paso Intelligence Center.

commercial vehicles traveling along Texas highways in 2000. Three of the seizures were 10 kilograms or more: 10.0 kilograms were seized from a private vehicle traveling on I-40 from California to Missouri; 10.9 kilograms from a private vehicle traveling on I-35 from Laredo to Austin; and 10.9 kilograms from a private vehicle traveling on US 281 from Donna (TX) to San Antonio.

Methamphetamine also is transported into and through the state by couriers traveling aboard

buses and trains, by couriers traveling on foot, and via package delivery services. Operation Jetway data indicate that in 2000, law enforcement officers in Texas seized 22 kilograms of methamphetamine that were transported (or intended for transport) aboard buses, trains, or via package delivery services. The majority (12 kg) was seized from passengers or luggage on commercial buses.

Distribution

Mexican DTOs and criminal groups are the primary wholesale distributors of methamphetamine in Texas. Hispanic street gangs, prison gangs, and OMGs also distribute wholesale quantities of the drug. According to the DEA Austin Resident Office and the Midland Police Department, Hispanic street gangs and prison gangs distribute methamphetamine at the wholesale level in their jurisdictions. The Tri-County Narcotics Task Force reports that OMGs, particularly Bandidos, dominate methamphetamine distribution in its jurisdiction north of Corpus Christi. Other OMGs, such as Tiburones and Amigos, also distribute wholesale quantities of methamphetamine throughout the state.

Mexican criminal groups are the primary retail distributors of methamphetamine in Texas. Caucasian criminal groups as well as street gangs, prison gangs, OMGs, and various other criminal groups and independent dealers also distribute methamphetamine at the retail level. Caucasian criminal groups and independent dealers who operate methamphetamine laboratories in the state also distribute retail quantities of the drug. The San Antonio Police Department reports that prison gangs including Texas Mafia, Texas Syndicate, Mexikanemi, and Hermanos de Pistoleros Latinos (see text box) are the primary retail methamphetamine distributors in its jurisdiction. The San Antonio Police Department reports that the Bandidos OMG distributes retail quantities of methamphetamine in that city.

**Mexikanemi and
Hermanos de Pistoleros Latinos**

Mexikanemi, also known as Texas Mexican Mafia or La Emi, was formed in 1984. It is the largest and fastest-growing prison gang in Texas, with more than 1,500 confirmed members. Members engage in a variety of criminal activities including extortion, drug distribution, and murder. Mexikanemi is not affiliated with the Mexican Mafia prison gang based in California. Hermanos de Pistoleros Latinos is a Texas-based prison gang that generally operates in Dallas, Grand Prairie, Houston, Laredo, San Antonio, and Victoria. It is composed solely of current or former prison inmates of Latino origin, including individuals who speak Spanish or who are descendants of Latino or Hispanic families. Members inside and outside prison commit a variety of crimes, including drug and weapons trafficking, murder, assault, and burglary.

Other retail methamphetamine distributors are present in Texas, but their activities vary depending on location. The Garland Police Department reports that the Asian Pride and Little Saigon Hoodlums street gangs distribute methamphetamine at the retail level in its jurisdiction. The Harris County Sheriff's Department, whose jurisdiction includes Houston, reports that retail-level methamphetamine distribution in its area is dominated by Caucasian criminal groups, but that Asian (Chinese), Caribbean, and Mexican criminal groups, OMGs, prison gangs, and street gangs also distribute the drug. The

Central South Texas Narcotics Task Force in George West reports that Mexican criminal groups and local independent dealers are the primary retail distributors of methamphetamine in its jurisdiction.

Retail-level methamphetamine distributors in Texas employ various marketing techniques in an attempt to expand their operations. The Houston

Police Department reports that the increasing popularity of methamphetamine in its jurisdiction is largely due to retail distributors passing out samples of the drug to pique user interest. Dealers also give away samples of methamphetamine with other drugs they distribute.

Cocaine

Cocaine also is a significant drug threat to Texas. Powdered cocaine and crack cocaine are readily available and frequently abused throughout the state; however, crack cocaine is more readily available in larger metropolitan areas such as Austin, Dallas, Houston, and San Antonio. Mexican DTOs and criminal groups dominate the transportation and wholesale distribution of powdered cocaine. They generally smuggle cocaine from Mexico into Texas through and between POEs along the U.S.–Mexico border, particularly in South Texas. African American, Caucasian,

Hispanic, and Mexican criminal groups; local independent dealers; OMGs; street gangs such as Black Disciples, Bloods, Crips, and Latin Kings; and prison gangs including Barrio Azteca, Hermanos de Pistoleros Latinos, Mexikanemi, Raza Unida, and Texas Syndicate distribute powdered cocaine at the retail level in Texas. Retail quantities of crack cocaine are distributed by Mexican and other Hispanic criminal groups, Caucasian and African American criminal groups, local independent dealers, street gangs, and prison gangs.

Abuse

Cocaine abuse is a considerable concern to law enforcement agencies in Texas. In response to the NDTs 2002, 45 percent of the 159 law enforcement respondents in Texas who rated the level of powdered cocaine abuse in their jurisdictions reported high levels of abuse, and 39 percent reported medium levels of abuse. Similarly, 48 percent reported high levels of crack cocaine abuse and 24 percent reported medium levels of crack abuse. Combined data from the 1999 and the 2000 NHSDA indicate that the percentage of Texas residents who reported having abused cocaine at least once in the year prior to the survey (2.0%) was slightly higher than the percentage nationwide (1.6%).

The number of treatment admissions for cocaine abuse to TCADA-funded treatment facilities exceeded the number of admissions for any other illicit drug in 2002. According to TCADA, cocaine accounted for 29 percent of all adult

treatment admissions in 2002—crack cocaine accounted for 21 percent, and powdered cocaine accounted for 8 percent. Moreover, treatment admissions for cocaine abuse fluctuated but increased overall from 1998 through 2002. According to TCADA, there were 8,498 adult admissions for crack cocaine abuse in 1998, 10,555 in 1999, 7,157 in 2000, 7,573 in 2001, and 8,984 in 2002. Admissions for powdered cocaine abuse also fluctuated but increased overall, from 3,124 in 1998 to 3,513 in 1999, 2,692 in 2000, 2,682 in 2001, and 3,275 in 2002.

Cocaine abuse is also a problem among Texas' youth. According to TCADA, cocaine accounted for 6 percent of all youth admissions to TCADA-funded treatment programs in 2002, a decrease from 11 percent in 1998. In 2002 there were 345 youth admissions for powdered cocaine abuse and 68 for crack cocaine abuse. Teenagers who live near the U.S.–Mexico border are at

particular risk. According to the 2002 Texas School Survey of Substance Use Among Students: Grades 7-12, almost 14 percent of students in grades 7 through 12 living in the border region reported using powdered cocaine at least once in their lifetime compared with 7 percent of students living in other parts of the state. Lifetime use of crack cocaine among border students also was higher (4%) than among students residing elsewhere in the state (3%). Moreover, according to TCADA, high school seniors in the Lower Rio Grande Valley reported higher rates of lifetime use of powdered cocaine and crack cocaine than students from other parts of the state.

The number of cocaine ED mentions in the Dallas metropolitan area increased dramatically from 1,778 in 1997 to 2,586 in 1998 then decreased sharply to 1,770 in 2001, according to DAWN. In 2001 the rate of cocaine mentions per 100,000 population in the Dallas metropolitan area (57) was lower than the rate nationwide (76).

Cocaine-related deaths in Texas reached historic levels in 2001. According to TCADA, there

were 491 cocaine-related deaths in 2001, an increase from 424 in 2000, 413 in 1999, 382 in 1998, and 338 in 1997. Moreover, DAWN mortality data indicate that the number of deaths in which cocaine was a factor in Dallas and San Antonio increased in both metropolitan areas from 1997 through 2001. Cocaine-related deaths increased from 140 in 1997 to 185 in 2001 in the Dallas metropolitan area and from 45 in 1997 to 130 in 2001 in the San Antonio metropolitan area.

The number of calls to Texas Poison Control Centers have increased every year from 497 calls in 1998 to 498 in 1999, 874 in 2000, 1,024 in 2001, and 1,195 in 2002.

Cocaine frequently was detected among adult male arrestees in Dallas, Laredo, and San Antonio in 2001. According to ADAM program data, 30.4 percent of adult male arrestees tested positive for cocaine in Dallas, 35.0 percent tested positive in Laredo, and 29.6 percent tested positive in San Antonio.

Availability

Cocaine is widely available throughout Texas. Powdered cocaine is generally available in most areas of the state; 89 percent of the 169 law enforcement respondents to the NDTs 2002 in Texas who rated the level of powdered cocaine availability reported that powdered cocaine was readily available in their jurisdictions. Crack cocaine is readily available in larger urban areas such as Austin, Dallas, Houston, and San Antonio.

According to FDSS data, cocaine seizures fluctuated between 1998 and 2002. Federal law enforcement officers in Texas seized 18,460 kilograms in 1998, 23,617 kilograms in 1999, 12,177 kilograms in 2000, 15,140 kilograms in 2001, and 17,008 kilograms in 2002. Despite these fluctuations, cocaine remains readily available—Texas ranked first nationwide in terms of the quantity of cocaine seized by federal officers in 2002. (See Table 1 on page 3.)

According to USSC data, in FY2001 the percentage of drug-related federal sentences in Texas that were cocaine-related (25%) was lower than the national percentage (43%). The number of sentences for powdered cocaine in the state (731) was higher than the number for crack cocaine (428) in FY2001. The number of powdered and crack cocaine-related sentences in Texas increased from 919 in FY1997 to 1,159 in FY2001.

Cocaine prices are stable throughout the state. In FY2002 cocaine prices throughout Texas varied depending on the location of sale and the amount purchased. DEA reported that wholesale quantities of powdered cocaine sold for \$14,000 to \$23,000 per kilogram in Dallas, \$15,000 to \$16,500 per kilogram in El Paso, and \$14,000 to \$20,000 per kilogram in Houston. At the midlevel, powdered cocaine sold for \$400 per ounce in Dallas, \$960 per ounce in El Paso, and \$500 to \$800 per ounce

in Houston. Retail quantities sold for \$50 to \$100 per gram in Dallas, \$50 to \$60 per gram in El Paso, and \$80 to \$100 per gram in Houston. The average retail-level price for crack was approximately \$20 per rock. In the Austin area retail crack distributors purchase a “five-pack” (five rocks) for \$50 from midlevel distributors, break each rock into five

rocks, and then sell those 25 individual packs or rocks for \$20 each. Smaller pieces called kibbles and bits sell for \$1 to \$10. Purity levels of powdered cocaine in Texas ranged from 70 to 90 percent in FY2002, while purity levels of crack ranged from 35 to 84 percent, according to DEA, HIDTA, and Texas DPS.

Violence

Violent criminal activity in Texas has been associated with powdered cocaine distribution. A large percentage of this violence results from competition for control of distribution areas. Texas law enforcement officials throughout the state report that this competition leads to violent confrontations that pose a serious risk to innocent bystanders. The Hermanos de Pistoleros Latinos prison gang (see text box on page 14), which coordinates and conducts street-level distribution of cocaine, heroin, marijuana, and methamphetamine, engages in violent activity including homicide, drive-by shooting, and aggravated assault in connection with its drug operations. In addition, Hermanos de Pistoleros Latinos sells and trades firearms that members obtain from burglaries of residential homes and businesses.

Violence also has been associated with crack cocaine distribution, particularly in urban areas throughout Texas. The 24th & 25th Judicial District Narcotics Task Force in Seguin reports that crack cocaine-related criminal activity poses the greatest threat to the safety of the citizens in that area. Neighborhoods in Austin also have been inundated with criminal activity related to crack distribution. The Tri-County Narcotics Task Force located north of Corpus Christi reports that crack dealers operate openly and perpetrate violence that endangers the local residents. Moreover, the Westside Narcotics Task Force in Brookshire reports that petty thefts, residential and commercial burglaries, aggravated assaults, and homicides in its jurisdiction have been directly related to the distribution and abuse of crack cocaine.

Production

Coca is not cultivated nor is cocaine produced in Texas. Cocaine is produced in South America, primarily in Colombia. Retail distributors, however, convert powdered cocaine into crack within the state.

The conversion of powdered cocaine into crack occurs primarily in urban areas of the state, generally at or near distribution sites. However, some crack cocaine is transported into and within

the state. The DEA Dallas Division reports that crack cocaine is converted within that city but also is transported into the area from Los Angeles and Houston. Moreover, the DEA Houston Division reports that crack cocaine is converted in its jurisdiction but also is transported into that area from Corpus Christi and the Starr County/Rio Grande City area.

Transportation

Texas is a primary entry point for powdered cocaine smuggled into the United States. EPIC data indicate that the amount of cocaine seized in Texas within 150 miles of the U.S.–Mexico border decreased from 24,137 kilograms in 1999 to 15,998 kilograms in 2002. Despite this decrease, Texas consistently ranked first in the amount of cocaine seized in states along the U.S.–Mexico border. (See Table 3.) In each of the years in this period, cocaine seizures in the border area accounted for more than 60 percent of the total cocaine seized in the state.

Mexican DTOs and criminal groups are the primary transporters of powdered cocaine into Texas. These DTOs and criminal groups smuggle the drug through and between POEs along the U.S.–Mexico border, particularly in South Texas. In addition to Mexican DTOs and criminal groups, various other criminal groups smuggle cocaine into Texas and transport it throughout the state. The San Antonio Police Department reports that local independent dealers transport cocaine into the San Antonio Area. The Alamo Area Narcotics Task Force in San Antonio also reports that local independent dealers transport cocaine into and through its jurisdiction, as well as Colombian and Caucasian criminal groups, OMGs, and local street gangs. In addition, law enforcement officials in Floresville report that the Mexikanemi and Texas Syndicate

prison-based gangs transport cocaine into and through its jurisdiction.

Powdered cocaine is smuggled into Texas primarily through POEs along the U.S.–Mexico border in private and commercial vehicles. The drug typically is concealed in trunks, gas tanks, side and rear quarter panels, engines, tires, and front and back seats of private vehicles and sleeper areas, refrigeration units, and modified compartments of tractor-trailers. In one incident in January 2002 U.S. Customs Service (USCS) agents seized more than 900 kilograms of cocaine (758 bricks) in Laredo. The shipment was concealed inside a hidden compartment located at the front of a tanker-trailer. On April 25, 2002, USCS officials at the Del Rio POE seized approximately 2,600 pounds of cocaine that was concealed inside the roof of a tractor-trailer. Cocaine also is routinely intermingled with legitimate cargo, including perishable goods. Powdered cocaine also is smuggled into Texas by maritime means including small boats, fishing vessels, recreational watercraft, barges, and coastal freighters. Traffickers use large maritime vessels to transport cocaine through the Gulf of Mexico and smaller vessels to smuggle cocaine across the Rio Grande. Moreover, cocaine is smuggled across the Rio Grande in bundles that are floated from Mexico into the United States. In April 2000 Laredo

Table 3. Cocaine Seizures Within 150 Miles of the U.S.–Mexico Border, in Kilograms, 1999–2002

	1999	2000	2001	2002
Arizona	5,265	2,252	3,034	2,538
California	7,118	6,001	4,140	3,381
New Mexico	749	219	171	392
Texas	24,137	14,210	12,777	15,998

Source: El Paso Intelligence Center.

Police Department officers seized a bundle containing 328 kilograms of cocaine that had been floated across the Rio Grande.

In addition, powdered cocaine is smuggled into Texas by couriers traveling aboard commercial aircraft, by couriers traveling on foot between POEs, or periodically by couriers traveling through tunnels that run underneath the U.S.–Mexico border, often near El Paso. Couriers also transport cocaine on commercial flights from El Dorado International Airport in Bogota, Colombia, to George Bush Intercontinental Airport in Houston. Couriers commonly travel on foot carrying small quantities of cocaine between POEs such as Presidio, Del Rio, and Eagle Pass. Couriers also use city sewer and drain tunnels to smuggle cocaine to stash houses in the El Paso area.

Cocaine also is transported into and through Texas on buses, trains, and via package delivery services. Operation Jetway data indicate that in 2000 law enforcement officers in Texas seized 538 kilograms of powdered cocaine and approximately 3 kilograms of crack cocaine that were transported (or intended for transport) aboard commercial aircraft, buses, trains, or via package delivery services. The largest single seizure of powdered cocaine (103 kg) in Texas as part of Operation Jetway in 2000 was from a package that was being shipped via the U.S. Postal Service from McAllen to an address in Winston-Salem, North Carolina.

Mexican DTOs operating near the border supply powdered cocaine to drug markets in cities throughout Texas as well as the rest of the United States including Atlanta, Chicago, Memphis, New York, St. Louis, and San Diego. These Mexican DTOs typically consolidate and store powdered cocaine at stash houses near the border, including locations in Brownsville, El Paso, Laredo, and McAllen for eventual transport to drug markets. They also smuggle powdered cocaine directly from Mexico to drug markets within and outside the state.

Texas highways are used extensively to transport cocaine within and through the state. Interstates 10 and 20, which traverse the state

from east to west, frequently are used by traffickers to transport cocaine to other states. Interstate 35, which originates at the U.S.–Mexico border in Laredo, is used to transport cocaine north to San Antonio, Austin, and Dallas as well as to drug markets in northern states. U.S. Highway 90, which extends from I-10 through San Antonio to Houston, is used to transport cocaine from the El Paso area to cities in the eastern United States.

Powdered cocaine frequently is seized from vehicles traveling on Texas highways. Operation Pipeline/Convoy data indicate that state and local law enforcement officers in Texas seized 2,641 kilograms of cocaine from commercial and private vehicles traveling on Texas highways in 2000. Crack cocaine accounted for less than 11 kilograms of the 2,641 kilograms seized in 2000.

Cocaine Concealment Methods

In January 2002 the Texas Department of Public Safety seized 8 kilograms of powdered cocaine from a tractor-trailer traveling east on I-10 in Chambers County. The cocaine was concealed beneath the bunk in the sleeper compartment.

Also in January 2002 officers with the Texas DPS seized more than 17 kilograms of powdered cocaine from a private vehicle traveling northbound on I-35 in Ellis County. The cocaine was concealed in the gas tank.

Source: Texas Department of Public Safety.

In October 2000 federal agents seized 11 kilograms of powdered cocaine found in an abandoned briefcase aboard a bus. The bus was traveling on I-10 west of Sierra Blanca.

Source: El Paso Intelligence Center.

In August 2000 150 kilograms of powdered cocaine were seized from a pickup truck traveling north on US 59 in Nacogdoches en route to Toledo, Ohio. The cocaine was hidden in the stereo speakers and the bed of the truck.

Source: El Paso Intelligence Center.

Distribution

Mexican DTOs and criminal groups are the primary wholesale distributors of powdered cocaine in Texas. Colombian criminal groups, OMGs, prison gangs, and street gangs also distribute wholesale quantities of powdered cocaine in the state, although to a lesser extent. The El Paso Police Department Gang Unit reports that wholesale powdered cocaine distribution in its region is conducted by Hispanic street gangs and prison gangs such as Barrio Azteca. Moreover, increasing numbers of Hispanic gang members from Chicago and members of Midwestern Folk Nation reportedly are moving to Texas to facilitate the distribution of powdered cocaine to drug markets in Chicago and other areas in the Midwest. Crack cocaine typically is not distributed in wholesale quantities in Texas.

African American, Caucasian, Hispanic, and Mexican criminal groups; local independent dealers; OMGs; street gangs such as Black Disciples, Bloods, Crips, and Latin Kings; and prison gangs such as Mexikanemi, Raza Unida, Hermanos de

Pistoleros Latinos, and Texas Syndicate distribute powdered cocaine at the retail level in Texas.

Retail quantities of crack cocaine are distributed by Mexican and other Hispanic criminal groups, Caucasian and African American criminal groups, local independent dealers, street gangs, and prison gangs. African American gangs, particularly Black Gangster Disciples, and Hispanic gangs such as Latin Kings control retail crack cocaine distribution in Houston. In Austin and San Antonio, African American street gangs such as Bloods and Crips, and Hispanic street gangs such as Raza Unida and Latin Kings dominate crack cocaine distribution.

Most retail-level powdered and crack cocaine distribution occurs in open-air markets in residential areas, including public housing complexes, and in high-traffic commercial areas. Retail quantities of powdered and crack cocaine often are packaged in small plastic or cellophane bags or in vials. Other packaging materials include electrical tape, masking tape, and sandwich bags.

Heroin

Heroin poses a considerable threat to Texas. Mexican black tar heroin and Mexican brown powdered heroin are the predominant types available throughout the state; however, South American, Southeast Asian, and Southwest Asian heroin are available to varying extents. Mexican DTOs and criminal groups control the transportation and wholesale distribution of Mexican black tar and brown powdered heroin. Colombian DTOs and criminal groups dominate

the transportation and wholesale distribution of South American heroin, while Nigerian and other West African groups control the transportation and distribution of Southeast Asian and Southwest Asian heroin. Mexican criminal groups dominate retail-level heroin distribution in the state. However, African American, Caucasian, and other Hispanic criminal groups, local independent dealers, prison gangs, and street gangs also distribute heroin at the retail level.

Abuse

Heroin abuse is a concern to law enforcement agencies throughout Texas. In response to the NDTS 2002, 13 percent of the 150 law enforcement respondents in Texas who rated the level of

heroin abuse in their jurisdictions reported high levels of abuse, 31 percent reported medium levels, and 55 percent reported low levels of abuse.

Heroin abuse is a major concern to substance abuse treatment providers in Texas. According to TCADA, the number of adult heroin-related admissions to TCADA-funded treatment facilities increased in 2002 following 2 years of decline. There were 4,528 adult treatment admissions for heroin abuse in 1998, 5,114 in 1999, 4,005 in 2000, 3,945 in 2001, and 5,127 in 2002. Heroin abuse among Texas youth appears to be stabilizing at low levels as evidenced by state treatment statistics. According to TCADA, the number of youth seeking treatment for heroin addiction at TCADA-funded programs increased from 83 in 1998 to 122 in 1999 to 132 in 2000, decreased to 79 in 2001, and remained stable at 80 in 2002.

A growing number of younger heroin users admitted to treatment report that they snort or smoke black tar heroin. Law enforcement officials report that individuals who snort black tar heroin typically freeze the drug, then crush it into a powder prior to administration. Smoking the drug involves heating it on a piece of aluminum foil over an open flame and inhaling rising wisps of smoke through a straw or similar device—a process called chasing the dragon.

The number of heroin ED mentions in the Dallas metropolitan area fluctuated but decreased overall from 1997 through 2001. In 1997 there were 505 heroin ED mentions in Dallas, 500 in 1998, 428 in 1999, 478 in 2000, and 443 in 2001, according to DAWN. The rate of heroin ED mentions per 100,000 population in the Dallas metropolitan area (14) was the second-lowest rate (behind Minneapolis) among the 21 metropolitan areas reporting to DAWN in 2001.

Across the state the number of deaths in which heroin was a factor fluctuated but remained

relatively stable from 1997 to 2001. According to TCADA, there were 333 heroin-related deaths in Texas in 1997, 374 in 1998, 370 in 1999, 320 in 2000, and 339 in 2001. In the Dallas metropolitan area, heroin/morphine-related deaths fluctuated but remained relatively stable from 1997 to 2001. According to DAWN, there were 73 heroin/morphine-related deaths reported in the Dallas metropolitan area in 1997, 69 in 1998, 77 in 1999, 94 in 2000, and 76 in 2001. Mortality data from DAWN indicate that in the San Antonio metropolitan area, heroin/morphine-related deaths increased notably from 1997 to 2001. There were 30 deaths in 1997, 30 in 1998, 77 in 1999, 90 in 2000, and 88 in 2001. Heroin-related deaths are also a significant concern in other areas of Texas. In April 2001 a series of heroin overdose deaths occurred in Travis County, which includes the city of Austin. Ten individuals died from heroin overdoses that month—four in one week alone. In Houston 15 individuals died from heroin overdoses over one weekend in August 2001. Law enforcement and health authorities attributed these overdose deaths to high-purity heroin that abusers were led to believe was cocaine.

The number of calls to Texas Poison Control Centers increased from 181 calls in 1998 to 218 in 1999 and 295 in 2000, then decreased to 241 in 2001 and 221 in 2002.

In 2001 heroin/opiates were detected in a fairly large percentage of adult male arrestees in Dallas, Laredo, and San Antonio. According to ADAM program data, in 2001, 4.8 percent of adult male arrestees tested positive for heroin or another opiate in Dallas, 10.7 percent tested positive in Laredo, and 9.1 percent tested positive in San Antonio.

Availability

Heroin is available throughout Texas; 49 percent of the 158 law enforcement respondents to the NDTs 2002 in Texas who rated the level of heroin availability reported that heroin was

readily available in their jurisdictions. Mexican black tar heroin is the predominant type available in Texas; Mexican brown powdered heroin is also available but to a lesser extent. South American

Texas Drug Threat Assessment

heroin is primarily available in Dallas and Houston. Southwest Asian and Southeast Asian heroin availability is limited in the state.

The quantity of heroin seized by federal law enforcement officers in Texas has fluctuated but remains high in comparison with other states. According to FDSS data, federal law enforcement officers in Texas seized 138 kilograms of heroin in 1998, 118 kilograms in 1999, 189 kilograms in 2000, 142 kilograms in 2001, and 291 kilograms in 2002. Although the quantity of heroin seized by federal officers fluctuated, heroin availability remains high—Texas ranked third nationwide in the amount of heroin seized by federal officers in 2002. (See Table 1 on page 3.)

According to USSC data, in FY2001, 2 percent of drug-related federal sentences in Texas were heroin-related compared with 7 percent nationally. The number of heroin-related federal sentences in Texas decreased each year from 176 in FY1997 to 98 in FY2001.

Heroin prices are relatively stable throughout most areas of Texas. According to DEA, in FY2002 Mexican black tar heroin sold for \$35,000 to \$60,000 per kilogram in Dallas and approximately \$31,000 per kilogram in El Paso.

During that period, Mexican black tar heroin sold for \$1,600 to \$2,800 per ounce in Dallas, \$1,000 to \$1,500 per ounce in El Paso, and \$1,000 to \$2,000 per ounce in Houston. In FY2002 retail quantities of Mexican black tar heroin sold for \$150 to \$250 per gram in Dallas and \$100 per gram in El Paso. (Retail prices were not available for Houston.) In Dallas during the first quarter of FY2003 Mexican brown powdered heroin sold for \$800 to \$1,600 per ounce and \$10 to \$20 per capsule. Mexican brown powdered heroin prices were not available for El Paso or Houston. During the same time period, South American heroin sold for \$60,000 to \$70,000 per kilogram and \$2,000 per ounce in Dallas. (No other prices were available.)

The purity of heroin varies throughout Texas, depending on location and type. The North Texas HIDTA reports that the purity level of Mexican black tar heroin increased from an average of 47 percent in 1998 to an average of nearly 60 percent in FY2001. The DEA Dallas Division reports that purity levels for South American heroin in its jurisdiction ranged from 74 to 89 percent. (No other purity information was available.)

Table 4. Purity and Price of Heroin Purchased in Dallas, El Paso, and Houston by DEA, 1995–2001

	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001
Dallas Purity	6.8%	3.5%	7.0%	11.8%	14.0%	16.0%	13.4%
Price/Milligram Pure	\$2.34	\$6.66	\$4.16	\$1.06	\$1.01	\$0.69	\$1.36
Houston Purity	16.0%	26.1%	16.3%	34.8%	17.4%	18.2%	11.3%
Price/Milligram Pure	\$1.36	\$2.15	\$2.20	\$2.43	\$1.24	\$1.14	\$1.51
El Paso Purity*	NA	NA	NA	NA	56.7%	50.8%	41.8%
Price Milligram Pure	NA	NA	NA	NA	\$0.49	\$0.34	\$0.44

Source: Drug Enforcement Administration.
*El Paso began reporting in mid-1999.

Violence

Heroin-related violence occurs throughout Texas, primarily in connection with distribution of the drug. Several violent prison gangs and street gangs distribute heroin in Texas. The Mexikanemi prison gang reportedly commits violent crimes such as extortion and murder to protect its heroin distribution operations. Members of Hermanos de Pistoleros Latinos, a prison gang that distributes various illicit drugs including heroin, frequently commit violent crimes such as burglary, homicide, and weapons trafficking on the West Side of San Antonio. Some of these crimes are committed in connection with their heroin distribution activities. Barrio Azteca (see text box), the most violent prison gang in El Paso County, distributes heroin, along with cocaine, marijuana, and other dangerous drugs such as MDMA and Rohypnol. Its members have been implicated in drug-related kidnapping, extortion, homicide, and murder-for-hire. The Vario Arnett-Benson and North Side Locos street gangs that distribute heroin in the Lubbock area reportedly have engaged in violent criminal activity in connection with their heroin distribution operations, including assault—particularly on law enforcement officers—drive-by shooting, homicide, and armed robbery.

Barrio Azteca

Barrio Azteca is currently the largest and most violent prison gang operating in the El Paso County area. The gang was formed by inmates in the Coffield Unit of the Texas Department of Criminal Justice in 1986. The gang has a paramilitary structure and an established leadership hierarchy. The “captains” maintain control of the organization, directing its drug trafficking operations and other criminal activities.

Heroin abusers generally are not associated with violent crime; however, abusers in Texas periodically commit property crimes to acquire money to purchase the drug. Odessa law enforcement officials report that local heroin abusers commit burglary in the city to support their heroin addiction. Moreover, the Plano Police Department reports that property crime in its jurisdiction often is linked to heroin abusers. Department officials also report that a large number of heroin users between the ages of 14 and 21 live in the neighborhoods where these crimes are committed.

Production

Opium is not cultivated nor is heroin produced in Texas. Heroin is produced in four primary source regions: Mexico, South America, Southeast Asia, and Southwest Asia. Most of the

heroin available in Texas is produced in Mexico; however, heroin from all of the primary source regions is available to some degree in the state.

Transportation

Heroin frequently is seized at or near the U.S.–Mexico border in Texas. EPIC data indicate that the amount of heroin seized in Texas within 150 miles of the U.S.–Mexico border more than doubled from 80 kilograms in 1999 to

162 kilograms in 2002. EPIC data also indicate that 66 percent of the heroin seized within 150 miles of the U.S.–Mexico border in 2002 was seized in Texas. (See Table 5 on page 24.)

Table 5. Heroin Seizures Within 150 Miles of the U.S.–Mexico Border in Kilograms, 1999–2002

	1999	2000	2001	2002
Arizona	12	59	6	9
California	119	106	240	71
New Mexico	8	3	3	2
Texas	80	70	129	162

Source: El Paso Intelligence Center.

Mexican DTOs and criminal groups dominate the smuggling of Mexican black tar and brown powdered heroin into Texas. These DTOs and criminal groups typically smuggle heroin through and between POEs along the U.S.–Mexico border, particularly in South Texas. Colombian DTOs and criminal groups control the smuggling of South American heroin into Texas, often employing Mexican criminal groups to transport the drug across the U.S.–Mexico border. Colombian DTOs and criminal groups also control the transportation of South American heroin within the state. They generally transport the drug to drug markets in major urban areas, primarily Dallas and Houston, and to drug markets in other states, either on their own or by contracting with others, including Dominican, Haitian, and Mexican criminal groups. Nigerian and other West African criminal groups control the transportation of Southeast Asian and Southwest Asian heroin into Texas. Most of this heroin is destined for cities outside Texas, such as Chicago and New York City.

Heroin transporters use a variety of methods to smuggle the drug into the state. Mexican DTOs and criminal groups primarily smuggle Mexican black tar and brown powdered heroin into the state in commercial and private vehicles outfitted

with specially designed hidden compartments. They commonly conceal heroin in toolboxes, bumpers, tires, gas tanks, engine compartments, or in shipments of legitimate cargo. Operation Pipeline/Convoy data indicate that state and local law enforcement officers in Texas seized 6 kilograms of heroin from commercial and private vehicles traveling on Texas highways in 2000.

Mexican DTOs and criminal groups also commonly use couriers traveling aboard commercial and private aircraft; buses, boats, and passenger trains; couriers traveling on foot between the POEs; and package delivery services to transport Mexican black tar and brown powdered heroin into Texas. Colombian DTOs and criminal groups primarily use couriers aboard commercial aircraft as well as package delivery services to smuggle South American heroin into Texas. Nigerian and other West African criminal groups use couriers aboard commercial aircraft and package delivery services to smuggle Southeast Asian and Southwest Asian heroin into the state.

Heroin transporters often use locations in Texas as transshipment points for heroin destined for markets outside the state. Seizure data indicate that the Dallas/Fort Worth International Airport and George Bush Intercontinental Airport in Houston frequently are used by couriers en route to major drug markets outside Texas, including Atlanta, Baltimore, Chicago, Los Angeles, Newark, New York, Philadelphia, and St. Louis. Operation Jetway data indicate that in 2000 law enforcement officers in Texas seized 61.2 kilograms of heroin that were transported (or intended for transport) aboard commercial aircraft, buses, trains, or via package delivery services. In 2000 the largest heroin seizure under Operation Jetway in Texas was 24 kilograms seized from the luggage of an airline passenger destined for New York City.

Heroin Concealment Methods

The Texas Department of Public Safety, in cooperation with the South Texas HIDTA, seized nearly 34 kilograms of Mexican brown powdered heroin on April 12, 2002. The heroin, discovered during a highway interdiction in Atascosa County, had been transported from McAllen and was destined for San Antonio. It was packaged in tin cans and concealed within the tires of a pickup truck. This seizure is unusual because law enforcement authorities previously have encountered this concealment method only in connection with marijuana smuggling.

Source: Texas Department of Public Safety.

USCS officials at Dallas/Fort Worth International Airport seized heroin-soaked clothing from a male passenger in April 2002. The clothing was concealed in a duffel bag and contained approximately 2 to 4 kilograms of heroin. The suspect was traveling from Caracas, Venezuela, to New York City and reportedly was paid \$15,000 by a Colombian man to transport the heroin. This was the first seizure of heroin-soaked clothing at Dallas/Fort Worth International Airport.

Source: U.S. Customs Service (now part of the Bureau of Customs and Border Protection).

In August 2002 USCS officials in Laredo seized three large shipments of Mexican brown powdered heroin. On August 1, 2002, inspectors at the Laredo POE arrested a Mexican citizen who was carrying a tote bag containing four jackets with 3.3 kilograms of Mexican brown powdered heroin sewn into the linings. Following this seizure, USCS agents searched the suspect's hotel room and seized an additional 6.8 kilograms of Mexican brown powdered heroin that was sewn into the linings of eight other jackets. On August 18, 2002, officials at the Laredo POE seized 6.3 kilograms of Mexican brown powdered heroin sewn into the linings of 19 articles of clothing that were packed in a suitcase.

Source: U.S. Customs Service (now part of the Bureau of Customs and Border Protection).

On April 1, 2003, CBP (Border Patrol) agents seized 6.8 kilograms of Mexican black tar heroin from a commercial bus passenger at a checkpoint in western Texas. CBP agents at the Sierra Blanca checkpoint stopped the bus, which was traveling east on I-10 from El Paso to San Antonio. Agents had instructed the passengers to exit the bus and claim their luggage; however, a backpack and a plastic bag were not claimed. The agents examined the backpack and plastic bag, finding five pairs of shoes that seemed unusually heavy. Upon further examination, the agents found heroin concealed inside the soles of the shoes. One of the passengers admitted to transporting the bags and claimed that an individual in El Paso had asked him to take the bags to San Antonio on the bus. The passenger, a Mexican citizen, was arrested.

Source: Bureau of Customs and Border Protection.

Distribution

Mexican DTOs and criminal groups are the primary wholesale distributors of Mexican black tar and brown powdered heroin throughout Texas. Colombian and Dominican DTOs and criminal groups dominate the wholesale distribution of South American heroin in the state. Nigerian and other West African criminal groups control the wholesale distribution of Southeast and Southwest

Asian heroin; Asian criminal groups also distribute Southeast and Southwest Asian heroin at the wholesale level as well, although to a lesser extent.

Mexican criminal groups dominate the retail distribution of heroin in Texas, generally selling Mexican black tar and brown powdered heroin. Other Hispanic criminal groups, African American

and Caucasian criminal groups as well as local independent dealers, street gangs, and prison gangs such as Barrio Azteca, Hermanos de Pistoleros

Latinos, Mexicanemi, and Texas Syndicate also serve as retail-level heroin distributors in the state.

Marijuana

Marijuana is a significant drug threat to Texas. Marijuana produced in Mexico is the predominant type available throughout the state. Locally produced marijuana is also available, although to a lesser extent. Cannabis cultivation occurs within the state, primarily in the eastern and northern regions and generally is controlled by Caucasian criminal groups and independent dealers. Mexican DTOs and criminal groups dominate the smuggling of marijuana into Texas;

they also dominate the wholesale distribution of the drug. Caucasian, Colombian, and Jamaican criminal groups; local independent dealers; prison gangs; street gangs; and OMGs also distribute marijuana at the wholesale level. Caucasian, African American, Jamaican, and Hispanic criminal groups; local independent dealers; prison gangs; and street gangs are the primary retail-level distributors of marijuana in the state.

Abuse

Marijuana is available and abused throughout Texas. In response to the NDTs 2002, 74 percent of the 164 law enforcement respondents in Texas who rated the level of marijuana abuse in their jurisdictions reported high levels of abuse, and 22 percent reported medium levels of abuse. Only 4 percent reported low levels of abuse. Despite the high levels of marijuana abuse in the state, combined data from the 1999 and the 2000 NHSDA indicate that the percentage of Texas residents aged 12 and older who reported having abused marijuana at least once in the month prior to the survey (3.4%) was lower than the percentage nationwide (4.8%).

Marijuana abuse in Texas is a concern to treatment providers. According to TCADA, the number of adult treatment admissions for marijuana abuse fluctuated but increased overall from 1998 through 2002. There were 3,057 admissions in 1998, 3,705 in 1999, 3,207 in 2000, 3,643 in 2001, and 4,182 in 2002.

Marijuana abuse by adolescents is of particular concern to law enforcement and health professionals. According to TCADA, marijuana was the primary drug of abuse for 82 percent of the 5,178 youth drug treatment admissions (excluding

alcohol) to TCADA-funded facilities in 2002. Moreover, marijuana was reported by seventh-through twelfth-grade students as the most commonly used illicit drug in the state, according to the 2002 Texas School Survey of Substance Use Among Students: Grades 7-12. According to survey responses, the average age of first marijuana use among students in Texas is 13.

The number of marijuana ED mentions in the Dallas metropolitan area fluctuated but increased overall from 1997 to 2001. According to DAWN, there were 916 marijuana ED mentions in 1997, 1,510 in 1998, 1,172 in 1999, 1,225 in 2000, and 1,049 in 2001. The rate of marijuana mentions per 100,000 population in the Dallas metropolitan area (34) was the lowest rate among the 21 metropolitan areas reporting to DAWN.

Marijuana commonly is detected in adult male arrestees in Texas. According to ADAM program data for 2001, 32.9 percent of adult male arrestees tested positive for marijuana abuse in Dallas, 26.4 percent tested positive in Laredo, and 40.7 percent tested positive in San Antonio.

Availability

Marijuana is readily available throughout Texas; 98 percent of the 172 law enforcement respondents to the NDTA 2002 in Texas who rated the level of marijuana availability reported that marijuana was readily available in their jurisdictions. Marijuana produced in Mexico is the predominant type available in the state. Marijuana produced in Texas is also available, although to a lesser extent.

Marijuana frequently is seized in Texas, and seizures often involve large quantities of the drug. FDSS data indicate that the quantity of marijuana seized by federal law enforcement officers in Texas increased dramatically from 364,525 kilograms in 1998 to 540,197 in 1999 and 629,886 in 2000. Thereafter, the quantity of marijuana seized declined to 610,828 kilograms in 2000 and 555,324 in 2002. Despite the decline, Texas ranked first nationwide in the amount of marijuana seized by federal officers in 2002. (See Table 1 on page 3.) According to FDSS data, the total amount of marijuana seized in Texas in 2002 (555,324 kilograms) was greater than the amount seized in the other 49 states combined (approximately 488,000 kilograms).

According to USSC data, in FY2001, 64 percent of drug-related federal sentences in Texas were marijuana-related, compared with 33 percent nationally. Moreover, the number of marijuana-related federal sentences in Texas increased from 1,684 in FY1997 to 2,907 in FY2001.

Marijuana prices vary throughout the state depending on potency, quantities purchased, purchase frequencies, buyer-seller relationships, and transportation costs. According to DEA, during the fourth quarter of FY2002 wholesale prices for commercial-grade marijuana ranged from \$450 to \$700 per pound in Dallas, \$250 to \$500 per pound in El Paso, and \$300 to \$600 per pound in Houston. Retail quantities sold for \$10 per gram in Dallas and \$4 per gram in El Paso. (Gram prices were not available for Houston.) Sinsemilla sold for \$900 to \$1,200 per pound at the wholesale level in Dallas. (No other prices for sinsemilla were available.) Marijuana potency also varies throughout the state. According to the Potency Monitoring Project, the average concentration of THC (tetrahydrocannabinol) for commercial-grade marijuana in Texas was 6.2 percent in 2000. (No other potency information was available.)

Violence

Marijuana-related violence occurs periodically in Texas, usually in connection with production or distribution of the drug. Law enforcement officials report that cannabis cultivators sometimes use animal traps, armed guards, explosive devices, and trip wires to secure their production sites. Street gangs that distribute marijuana, such as Asian Pride, commit drive-by shootings, extortion, home invasions, and assaults, some of which likely are related to their marijuana distribution operations.

CBP authorities report that violent confrontations between law enforcement and drug smugglers in the border area have increased. Incidents of smugglers carrying guns also have become increasingly common, according to CBP and EPIC. (See text box on page 28.) According to Operation Pipeline/Convoy data, 24 of the 46 weapons seized from drug transporters on Texas highways in 2000 were seized from marijuana transporters.

U.S. Border Patrol Agent Wounded by Marijuana Smuggler

On October 12, 2002, a USBP agent was shot in the leg by Mexican marijuana smugglers near Fort Hancock, Texas. The incident began after USBP agents became suspicious of a pickup truck traveling in an area along the U.S.–Mexico border that often is used as a drug smuggling route. The agents pursued the truck for approximately 30 minutes until the smugglers drove the truck into the Rio Grande River and fled on foot through the river into Mexico. When the agents approached the abandoned truck, the smugglers shot at them. The agents returned fire, and during the exchange one of the agents was wounded in the leg. The smugglers then fled farther into Mexico. During a subsequent search authorities discovered 1,901 pounds of marijuana concealed in the cab and bed of the truck.

Source: U.S. Border Patrol (now part of the Bureau of Customs and Border Protection).

Production

Marijuana produced in Mexico and Texas is available throughout the state; however, Mexico-produced marijuana is the dominant type. Cannabis is cultivated in the state at indoor and outdoor grow sites. Indoor grow sites are located in every part of the state, while outdoor grow sites primarily are located in the eastern and northern areas of the state. The climate and topography in western and southern Texas are not conducive to outdoor cannabis cultivation. Caucasian criminal groups and independent Caucasian producers are the primary cultivators of cannabis within Texas. Mexican criminal groups and independent Mexican producers also cultivate cannabis in the state, but to a lesser extent. Cannabis cultivators often use dense, forested areas, many of which are in the eastern part of the state, as cultivation sites to avoid detection by law enforcement. These cultivation

sites are typically small, containing 30 to 40 plants, well-concealed, and scattered over large areas.

Eradication data indicate that cannabis cultivation in Texas may be increasing. According to the DEA Domestic Cannabis Eradication/Suppression Program (DCE/SP), the number of cannabis plants eradicated by law enforcement officials in Texas decreased from 60,687 in 1999 to 26,433 in 2000, and then increased to 50,110 in 2001. During that period the number of eradicated plants cultivated in outdoor plots decreased from 58,164 in 1999 to 21,759 in 2000, and then increased to 40,133 in 2001. The number of plants seized from indoor grow operations in Texas increased from 2,523 in 1999 to 4,674 in 2000, then to 9,977 in 2001.

Transportation

Texas is a significant entry point for marijuana smuggled into the United States. EPIC data reflecting drug seizures made within 150 miles of the U.S.–Mexico border indicate that more marijuana was seized in Texas than in any other state along the border from 1999 through 2002. (See Table 6.)

Mexican DTOs and criminal groups dominate the smuggling of marijuana from Mexico into Texas. They typically smuggle marijuana into Texas across the U.S.–Mexico border through POEs and transport the drug to locations within the state or to drug markets throughout the country. Caucasian independent dealers also smuggle marijuana into Texas, but to a lesser extent.

Table 6. Marijuana Seizures Within 150 Miles of the U.S.–Mexico Border, in Pounds, 1999–2002

	1999	2000	2001	2002
Arizona	169,586	197,036	212,229	246,161
California	191,569	230,110	202,046	126,161
New Mexico	35,079	45,209	51,527	37,347
Texas	402,567	459,619	592,771	604,993

Source: El Paso Intelligence Center.

Marijuana transporters primarily smuggle the drug into and through Texas in private and commercial vehicles. (See text box on page 30.) Seizure data indicate that large quantities of marijuana are transported into and through the state via highways. State and local law enforcement officers in Texas reporting to Operations Pipeline/Convoy seized a total of 63,514 kilograms of marijuana from commercial and private vehicles traveling on Texas highways in 2000. Marijuana was, by far, the most frequently seized drug under Operations Pipeline/Convoy.

The private and commercial vehicles used to transport marijuana into and through the state often are outfitted with specially designed hidden compartments. Marijuana has been discovered in toolboxes, bumpers, tires and spare tires, gas tanks, engine compartments, and in various other compartments built into vehicles. Marijuana transporters also intermingle the drug with legitimate cargo in trucks, for example among perishable goods such as fruits and vegetables.

Marijuana transporters also smuggle marijuana into Texas using couriers traveling aboard commercial and private aircraft, buses, boats, and passenger trains; couriers traveling between POEs on horses, all-terrain vehicles, and foot; and package delivery services. Operation Jetway data indicate that in 2000, law enforcement officers in Texas seized 11,659 kilograms of marijuana that were transported (or intended for transport) aboard commercial aircraft, buses,

trains, or via package delivery services. The largest number of marijuana seizures was from buses (482), followed by 241 seizures from packages, 62 seizures at airports, and 39 seizures from train passengers or luggage.

In addition, Mexican DTOs also smuggle marijuana into the state via coastal freighters and fishing boats. The U.S. Coast Guard (USCG) seized more than 8,000 pounds of marijuana from an abandoned commercial fishing vessel near South Padre Island in January 2002. USCG also seized more than 1,700 pounds of marijuana near Port Mansfield in February 2002 from a Mexican shark boat that originated from Playa Baghdad, Mexico.

Drug transporters also smuggle marijuana into Texas on freight railcars. In March 2002 USCS agents in Laredo, Texas, seized 1,831 pounds of marijuana from a railcar crossing the border from Mexico into the United States. The marijuana was concealed in 25 burlap bags hidden in the car. In December 2002 workers at a paper mill in Louisiana discovered 2,260 pounds of marijuana in a railcar that originated in Mexico City and crossed into the United States at the Laredo POE. The marijuana was packed into 62 bundles and placed in 22 burlap bags that measured 4 feet by 2 feet, weighed at least 100 pounds each, and were camouflaged on the floor of the car. Officials from the West Monroe Metro Narcotics Unit in Louisiana believe the marijuana was destined for a location in southern Texas and, for an unknown reason, was not unloaded at its intended destination.

Large Seizures at Texas POEs

On February 7, 2003, USCS officials in El Paso seized more than 6 tons (12,620 pounds) of marijuana from a tractor-trailer that entered the United States at the Bridge of the Americas. An x-ray inspection revealed discrepancies in a load of wooden pallets in the trailer, and a drug-detection canine alerted to the presence of drugs in the trailer. The marijuana was packaged in cardboard boxes hidden behind the pallets. Two male Mexican nationals from Ciudad Juarez, Mexico, were arrested in the incident.

The largest marijuana seizure to date at the Laredo POE occurred on January 17, 2003, when USCS officials arrested a Mexican national and seized more than 4.5 tons of marijuana from a tractor-trailer. During an x-ray inspection, examiners noted discrepancies in the truck's cargo that was supposed to be boxes of empty glass containers. The inspectors then searched the trailer with a drug-detecting canine, which alerted to some of the boxes. When inspectors opened the boxes, they discovered 9,331 pounds of marijuana. The driver of the truck, a resident of Nuevo Laredo, Mexico, was arrested on federal charges of importation and possession with intent to distribute a controlled substance.

On June 29, 2002, USCS inspectors at the Bridge of Americas commercial cargo facility in El Paso seized a total of 11,803 pounds of marijuana from three tractor-trailers during a 70-minute time frame. In each incident, the marijuana was packaged in numerous small bundles and concealed behind false walls built into the front of the trailers. One trailer contained a total of 4,661 pounds of marijuana, another contained 4,918 pounds, and the third contained 2,224 pounds.

In February 2002 USCS officials in El Paso seized nearly 12,500 pounds of marijuana in one night. More than 2,050 pounds of marijuana were seized from a bus entering the United States from Mexico at the El Paso POE, and more than 10,400 pounds were seized from a private vehicle and a warehouse in the El Paso area.

In January 2002 USBP officials in Falfurrias seized approximately 4,000 pounds of marijuana from two tractor-trailers. Nearly 3,290 pounds were concealed inside a shipment of french fries, and 656 pounds were hidden in a load of bananas.

Sources: U.S. Customs Service and U.S. Border Patrol (now part of the Bureau of Customs and Border Protection).

Mexican DTOs and criminal groups increasingly are using juveniles to smuggle marijuana across the U.S.–Mexico border. In 2001, 162 juveniles were arrested for smuggling marijuana through the El Paso POE. The number of juvenile arrests has increased each year from 83 in 1997 to 99 in 1998, 148 in 1999, and 155 in 2000.

A large percentage of the marijuana smuggled across the U.S.–Mexico border into Texas is consolidated in Brownsville, El Paso, Houston, Laredo, McAllen, and San Antonio for later transportation to drug markets in Texas, as

well as drug markets in the Southeast, Midwest, and Northeast regions of the country. Mexican DTOs and criminal groups commonly transport this marijuana along I-10, I-20, and I-35 en route to destination cities such as Atlanta, Baltimore, Chicago, Detroit, Kansas City, Memphis, Milwaukee, New Orleans, New York City, and Philadelphia. Local independent dealers also transport locally produced marijuana along these routes, but most is intended for distribution in the area in which it is produced.

Distribution

Mexican DTOs and criminal groups dominate the wholesale distribution of marijuana throughout Texas. Caucasian, Colombian, and Jamaican criminal groups; local independent dealers; prison gangs; street gangs; and OMGs also distribute marijuana at the wholesale level. Local independent producers generally serve as wholesale distributors of the marijuana they produce within the state.

Caucasian, African American, Jamaican, and Hispanic criminal groups; local independent dealers; prison gangs such as Barrio Azteca and Texas Syndicate; and street gangs including Barrio Denver Harbor and Mara Salvatrucha distribute

marijuana at the retail level in Texas. These criminal groups, gangs, and local independent dealers typically are supplied by Mexican criminal groups. However, local independent producers also supply many of these groups, gangs, and independent dealers with locally produced marijuana, generally for retail distribution at or near the area in which the drug was produced.

Marijuana packaging varies depending on the amount distributed. Wholesale quantities are packaged in a variety of materials including cellophane, packaging tape, carbon paper, and plastic wrap. Retail quantities of marijuana commonly are packaged in plastic sandwich bags.

Other Dangerous Drugs

Other dangerous drugs (ODDs) include the club drugs MDMA, GHB and its analogs, ketamine, LSD, and Rohypnol; the hallucinogen PCP; and diverted pharmaceuticals. MDMA is readily available and abused in Texas and poses a considerable drug threat to the state. Other ODDs present varying threats to Texas. Various criminal groups transport club drugs into Texas via private vehicles, commercial aircraft, couriers on foot (crossing the U.S.–Mexico border), and package delivery services. Club drugs primarily are sold and abused by middle-class,

suburban teenagers and young adults at raves and nightclubs and on college campuses. PCP generally is distributed by local independent dealers throughout the state. Pharmaceuticals such as oxycodone (OxyContin), hydrocodone (Vicodin), hydromorphone (Dilaudid), alprazolam (Xanax), and cough syrup with codeine typically are diverted through a variety of techniques including pharmacy diversion, “doctor shopping,” and improper prescribing practices by physicians.

Club Drugs

Club drugs consist of illicit drugs that are commonly diverted and used at dance clubs and raves, including MDMA, GHB and its analogs, ketamine, LSD, and Rohypnol. These drugs are increasingly being used in suburban and rural areas. Club drugs are becoming increasingly popular in Texas, particularly among teenagers and young adults. Club drugs are a major concern among law enforcement and health professionals in Texas, who report increasing availability and use.

MDMA. MDMA (3,4-methylenedioxymethamphetamine), also known as Adam, ecstasy, XTC, E, and X, is a stimulant and low-level hallucinogen. The drug was patented in 1914 in Germany where it was sometimes given to psychiatric patients to assist in psychotherapy, a practice never approved by the American Psychological Association or the Food and Drug Administration. MDMA, sometimes called the hug drug, reportedly helps users to

Raves

Throughout the 1990s high energy, all-night dances known as raves, which feature techno music and flashing laser lights, increased in popularity among teens and young adults. Raves typically occur in permanent dance clubs or temporary weekend event sites set up in abandoned warehouses, open fields, empty buildings, or civic centers. MDMA is one of the most popular drugs distributed at raves. Rave managers often sell water, pacifiers, and glow sticks at rave parties. “Ravers” require water to offset dehydration caused by MDMA abuse; use pacifiers to avoid grinding their teeth—a common side effect of MDMA abuse; and wave glow sticks in front of their eyes because MDMA stimulates light perception.

become more “in touch” with others and “opens channels of communication.” However, abuse of the drug can cause psychological problems similar to those associated with methamphetamine and cocaine abuse, including confusion, depression, sleeplessness, anxiety, and paranoia. Negative physical effects can also result, including muscle tension, involuntary teeth clenching, blurred vision, and increased heart rate and blood pressure. MDMA abuse can also cause a marked increase in body temperature leading to muscle breakdown, kidney failure, cardiovascular system failure, stroke, or seizure as reported in some fatal cases. Researchers suggest that MDMA abuse may result in long-term and sometimes permanent damage to parts of the brain that are critical to thought and memory.

Teenagers and young adults are the primary abusers of MDMA; however, MDMA is gaining popularity among older users. According to TCADA, MDMA-related treatment admissions to TCADA-funded treatment facilities increased from 63 in 1998 to 521 in 2002. MDMA is widely available throughout Texas, particularly in metropolitan areas such as Austin, Dallas, Houston, and San Antonio. DAWN data indicate that MDMA ED mentions in the Dallas metropolitan area increased dramatically from 17 in 1997 to 77

in 2001. Contributing to the threat is increasing MDMA availability in suburban and rural areas. Law enforcement authorities in Bee, Gonzales, and Wharton Counties report increased MDMA availability in their jurisdictions.

MDMA Use Lower Among Students Living Near the U.S.–Mexico Border

MDMA use is lower among students in the border region of Texas than in other areas in the state. The 2002 Texas School Survey of Substance Use Among Students: Grades 7-12, reported that 6 percent of students in grades 7 through 12 living in the border region used MDMA at least once during their lifetime, and 2.6 percent used MDMA in the past month. By comparison, 9 percent of students living elsewhere in the state reported lifetime use of MDMA, and 3.2 percent reported past month use.

Source: Texas Commission on Alcohol and Drug Abuse.

Most of the MDMA abused in Texas is produced in the Netherlands and Belgium. MDMA production may be emerging in Texas, but to a very limited extent. MDMA is smuggled into Texas from Canada, Europe, and Mexico primarily by Israeli criminal groups. To a lesser extent, Dominican criminal groups also smuggle MDMA into Texas. MDMA transporters use several means to smuggle the drug, including couriers on foot entering the United States from Mexico, couriers traveling on commercial and private aircraft, private vehicles, and via package delivery services.

Caucasian local independent dealers and, to a lesser extent, Asian criminal groups, are the primary wholesale and retail distributors of MDMA in Texas. Many retail-level MDMA distributors in Texas are middle and upper-middle class Caucasian high school or college students. MDMA typically is distributed at colleges, raves, nightclubs, and private parties. MDMA distributed in Texas often is stamped with a brand name or a logo. According to DEA, in the fourth quarter of FY2002 MDMA sold for \$25 per tablet in Dallas, \$16 to \$20 per tablet in El Paso, and \$10 to \$30 per tablet in Houston.

MDMA also is transported from Texas to destinations in other U.S. states. For example, some Asian criminal groups transport shipments of MDMA from Texas, primarily overland, to major drug markets on the East Coast.

Large MDMA Seizure in Jefferson County

On January 9, 2003, the Jefferson County Sheriff's Department seized over 45,000 MDMA tablets and \$300,000 from an automobile traveling east on I-10 in Beaumont. According to the Sheriff's Department, an officer stopped the vehicle because it was being operated erratically. When the officer approached the vehicle, the driver was unable to roll down the window and had to exit the vehicle to speak with the officer. The driver consented to a search of the vehicle, at which time the drugs and money were discovered inside the driver's side door. All three occupants of the vehicle were arrested and charged with aggravated possession of a controlled substance. The three suspects were of Vietnamese descent and allegedly were en route from Houston to Connecticut.

Source: Jefferson County Sheriff's Department.

GHB and Analogs. GHB (gamma-hydroxybutyrate) and its analogs are available throughout the state; they pose a low and relatively stable drug threat to Texas.

According to data from Texas Poison Control Centers, the number of confirmed exposures to GHB or its analogs increased from 110 in 1998 to 153 in 1999, then decreased to 100 in 2002. DAWN data indicate that GHB ED mentions in the Dallas metropolitan area increased significantly from 72 in 1997 to 128 in 2001. In 2001 Dallas had the third-highest rate of GHB ED mentions per 100,000 population among the 21 metropolitan areas reporting to DAWN.

GHB is a depressant that occurs naturally in the body. Synthetic (man-made) GHB and its analogs—drugs that possess chemical structures that closely resemble GHB—are known as liquid MDMA, scoop, grievous bodily harm, fantasy,

and Georgia home boy. GHB and its analogs increasingly have been involved in poisonings, overdoses, and fatalities nationwide. Overdoses can occur quickly; some signs include drowsiness, nausea, vomiting, loss of consciousness, impaired breathing, and sometimes death. GHB and its analogs often are used in the commission of drug-facilitated sexual assault because of their sedative properties. The drugs are eliminated from the body quickly, which makes it difficult for health-care professionals to detect them using blood and urine screenings.

GHB available in Texas typically is sold and abused at social venues such as bars, nightclubs, and raves. According to DEA, during the fourth quarter of FY2002 GHB sold for \$5 to \$25 per dosage unit in Dallas and Houston. Young adults, particularly Caucasians, are the principal retail distributors and abusers of the drug. GHB analogs typically are obtained at disreputable health food stores, gyms, and via the Internet.

Ketamine. The threat posed to Texas by the distribution and abuse of ketamine is relatively low. According to Texas Poison Control Centers, 8 confirmed exposures to ketamine were reported in 1998, 7 in 1999, 15 in 2000, 14 in 2001, and 10 in 2002. DAWN data indicate that ketamine ED mentions in the Dallas metropolitan area increased from 3 in 1997 to 11 in 2001.

Ketamine is also known as K, special K, vitamin K, ket, kit-kat, and cat valium. Ketamine was placed on the Schedule III Controlled Substances list in the United States on July 13, 1999. However, the drug is still available over the counter in Mexico where it is sold as Kellar. It is an injectable anesthetic that in the United States is used legally as an animal tranquilizer. Ketamine abusers obtain the drug in liquid, powder, or tablet form. In its liquid form it can be injected either intramuscularly or intravenously. In its powder form ketamine resembles cocaine or methamphetamine and often is snorted or smoked with marijuana or tobacco products.

High doses of ketamine can cause delirium, amnesia, impaired motor function, high blood

pressure, depression, and potentially fatal respiratory problems. Low doses impair attention, learning ability, and memory. Short-term use of ketamine causes hallucinations; its major effect is dissociation, which includes out-of-body and near-death experiences. Ketamine gained popularity among abusers in the 1980s when it was discovered that large doses caused reactions similar to those experienced with PCP.

Ketamine usually is diverted from legitimate sources, primarily veterinary clinics, and is typically sold in Texas at locations such as nightclubs, raves, and techno parties. It also is sold over the Internet. According to DEA, ketamine sold for \$2,200 to \$2,500 per liter during the fourth quarter of FY2002 in Dallas; no other pricing information was available.

LSD. The distribution and abuse of LSD (lysergic acid diethylamide) poses a low threat to Texas. LSD, also known as acid, boomers, and yellow sunshine, is a hallucinogen that induces abnormalities in sensory perceptions. The effects of LSD are unpredictable depending upon the amount taken, the environment in which it is abused, and the abuser's personality, mood, and expectations. Abusers may feel the immediate effects for up to 12 hours. The physical effects include dilated pupils, higher body temperature, increased heart rate and blood pressure, sweating, loss of appetite, nausea, numbness, weakness, insomnia, dry mouth, and tremors. Two long-term disorders associated with LSD are persistent psychosis and flashbacks.

LSD is primarily available in urban areas of Texas, such as Austin, Dallas, Fort Worth, Houston, Midland, Plano, San Antonio, and Texarkana. Most of the LSD available in Texas is produced in California and typically is transported into the state by independent dealers in private vehicles. Caucasian college and high school students are the primary distributors of LSD. They generally sell the drug to teenagers and young adults at raves, bars, nightclubs, and

on college campuses. LSD is typically available in powder and liquid forms, in tablets or capsules, on pieces of blotter paper that absorb the drug, on gelatin cubes, and on sugar cubes. LSD is also available in various colors in gel tab form.

LSD prices vary depending on location. According to DEA, LSD sold for \$1 to \$10 per dose at the retail level in Dallas and \$5 to \$20 per dose in El Paso during the fourth quarter of FY2002. (Wholesale prices were not available.) In Houston LSD sold for \$450 per ounce at the wholesale level and \$10 per dose at the retail level during the fourth quarter of FY2002.

Rohypnol. Rohypnol (flunitrazepam) poses a relatively stable drug threat, primarily along the Texas–Mexico border. According to Texas Poison Control Centers, the number of confirmed exposures to Rohypnol increased from 100 in 1998 to 124 in 2000. Treatment admissions for the abuse of Rohypnol indicate relatively stable patterns of Rohypnol abuse. According to TCADA, there were 364 Rohypnol-related admissions to TCADA-funded treatment facilities in 1999, 324 in 2000, 397 in 2001, and 368 in 2002.

Rohypnol, also called roofies, rophies, Roche, and the forget-me pill, belongs to a class of drugs known as benzodiazepines, which also includes Valium, Klonopin, Halcion, Xanax, and Versed. Rohypnol is not approved for prescription use in the United States. Rohypnol is odorless, tasteless, and dissolves completely in liquid. It produces sedative-hypnotic effects, including muscle relaxation and amnesia, and can cause physiological and psychological dependence. Rohypnol often is used in the commission of drug-facilitated sexual assault because of its sedative properties. The effects of Rohypnol can impair or incapacitate a victim for 8 to 12 hours, and are exacerbated by the use of alcohol.

Rohypnol is sold and abused in Texas commonly at social venues such as bars, nightclubs, and raves throughout the state. Young adults are the principal retail distributors and abusers of the drug.

Hallucinogens

PCP. PCP (phencyclidine) is available throughout Texas but, for the most part, availability is limited to urban areas such as Dallas and Houston. DAWN data indicate that PCP ED mentions in the Dallas metropolitan area increased from 36 in 1997 to 96 in 2001.

PCP was developed as an intravenous anesthetic, but use of the drug in humans was discontinued in 1965 because patients became agitated, delusional, and irrational while recovering from its effects. PCP, also known as angel dust, embalming fluid, ozone, wack, and rocket fuel, is illegally produced in laboratories in the United States. It is a white crystalline powder that is soluble in water and has a bitter taste. The drug can be mixed with dyes and is available as a tablet, capsule, liquid, or colored powder.

PCP may be snorted, smoked, injected, or swallowed. When smoked, PCP is often applied to mint, parsley, oregano, tobacco, or marijuana. When combined with marijuana, the mixture is called a killer joint or crystal supergrass. Another method of PCP administration involves dipping a marijuana cigarette in a solution of PCP-laced embalming fluid and smoking it. This combination is known as fry or amp. A study conducted by TCADA revealed that fry abusers often are unaware that marijuana cigarettes dipped in embalming fluid usually contain PCP. Street dealers reportedly add the hallucinogen to embalming

fluid prior to dipping the cigarettes. In 2000 there were 121 marijuana-related calls to the Texas Poison Control Centers that also involved formaldehyde, fry, amp, or PCP; in 2001 there were 155.

Most of the PCP available in Texas is produced in California and typically is transported into the state by local independent dealers in private vehicles. According to data from Operations Pipeline and Jetway, in 2000 state and local law enforcement officers in Texas seized a total of 14.8 kilograms of PCP that were transported (or intended for transport) aboard commercial buses and a total of 1.6 kilograms that were transported in private vehicles. In addition, 10 of the 19 PCP seizures under Operations Pipeline and Jetway in the U.S. occurred in Texas. There were no PCP seizures from commercial vehicles reported under Operation Convoy in 2000.

Local independent dealers are the primary distributors of PCP in the state. PCP is also distributed by street gangs primarily in the Houston area. Prices for the drug vary depending on location. According to DEA, liquid PCP sold for \$3,800 per 16-ounce bottle and \$350 to \$500 per ounce at the wholesale level in Dallas. The drug sold for \$100 per gram at the retail level in Houston during the fourth quarter of FY2002. PCP-laced cigarettes sold for \$25 each at the retail level in Dallas.

Diverted Pharmaceuticals

Diverted pharmaceuticals pose an increasing threat to Texas. The most commonly diverted pharmaceuticals in the state include hydrocodone (Vicodin), alprazolam (Xanax), hydromorphone (Dilaudid), oxycodone (OxyContin), cough syrup with codeine, steroids, nasal spray (Stadol), and carisoprodol (Soma).

Pharmaceuticals are diverted in a variety of ways in Texas, including pharmacy diversion, “doctor shopping,” and improper prescribing practices by physicians. Pharmacy diversion occurs when pharmacy employees steal products from the shelves or through prescription forgeries. Diversion through doctor shopping occurs when individuals, who may or may not have a legitimate ailment, visit numerous physicians to obtain drugs in excess of what should legitimately be prescribed.

According to DEA, in the fourth quarter of FY2002 most diverted pharmaceuticals sold for \$2 to \$10 per dosage unit.

Outlook

Texas will continue to serve as a major destination and transshipment point for illicit drugs. Mexican DTOs will remain the greatest threat along the U.S.–Mexico border in Texas. These organizations will continue to use the region to transport and distribute large amounts of methamphetamine, cocaine, heroin, and marijuana destined for markets in Texas and the rest of the United States. Increasing trade between the United States and Mexico will contribute to the increasing volume of cross-border traffic, providing drug smugglers with more opportunities to smuggle illicit drugs into the country. Law enforcement interdiction efforts and increased security along the Southwest Border may force DTOs to adjust drug smuggling methods and transportation routes. As a result of these adjustments, violent confrontations between DTOs and an overall increase in violence along the Southwest Border can be expected.

Dextromethorphan Abuse by Youth

School personnel in Texas have been reporting problems with the abuse of dextromethorphan (DXM), especially the use of Robitussin-DM, Tussin, and Coricidin Cough and Cold Tablets HBP. These substances can be purchased over the counter and, if taken in large quantities, can produce hallucinogenic effects. Coricidin HBP pills are known as Triple Cs or Skittles.

Outreach workers in the Houston area report an emerging trend in the use of Coricidin HBP Cough and Cold pills (Triple Cs) by adolescents, with some recent admissions to treatment for abuse of these pills.

Source: Gulf Coast Addiction Technology Transfer Center.

Cocaine will remain a principal drug threat to Texas. Mexican DTOs and criminal groups have historically used the state to transport multiton shipments of cocaine into and through Texas to drug markets throughout the country, and there are no indications that this trend will change.

Heroin will continue to attract new users, particularly adolescents, because of its ready availability, high purity, and relatively low cost. Due to the influence of Mexican DTOs, black tar heroin will remain the predominant type available in the state.

Marijuana will remain the most commonly available and widely abused drug in Texas. Marijuana produced in Mexico will remain the predominant type available; however, the availability of locally produced marijuana may increase if

demand rises. Barring any major changes in drug flow patterns, Texas will continue to serve as the primary gateway for smuggling marijuana from Mexico into the United States.

The abuse of ODDs such as MDMA, GHB and its analogs, ketamine, LSD, Rohypnol, and PCP is likely to increase, particularly among teenagers and young adults. Adverse consequences from abuse of these drugs are likely to increase as new users experiment with them and combine them with other drugs or alcohol. As abuse of club drugs becomes more common in the urban areas of Texas, abuse of these drugs also will spread to the less populated areas of the state. Mexican DTOs may become involved in the distribution of club drugs if demand increases.

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Sources

State and Regional

24th & 25th Judicial District Narcotics Task Force

81st Judicial District Task Force Administration

Agriplex Roadrunners Drug Task Force

Alamo Area Narcotics Task Force

Alamo Police Department

Allen Police Department

Alpine Police Department

Amarillo Police Department

Angleton Police Department

Anthony Police Department

Arlington Police Department

Atascosa County Sheriff's Office

Austin County Sheriff's Office

Austin Police Department

Bandera County Sheriff's Office

Bastrop Police Department

Beaumont Police Department

Beeville Police Department

Bellaire Police Department

Bell County Sheriff's Office

Bexar County Sheriff's Office

Bi-State Narcotics Task Force

Texas Drug Threat Assessment

Brenham Police Department
Brewster County Sheriff's Office
Brownsville Police Department
Bryan Police Department
Burnet Police Department
Calhoun County Sheriff's Office
Cameron County Sheriff's Office
Narcotics Division
Carrollton Police Department
Cedar Park Police Department
Central East Texas Narcotics Task Force
Central South Texas Narcotics Task Force
Central Texas Narcotics Task Force
College Station Police Department
Collin County Sheriff's Office
Colorado County Sheriff's Office
Comal County Sheriff's Office
Conroe Police Department
Coppell Police Department
Copperas Cove Police Department
Corpus Christi Police Department
Crowley Police Department
Culberson County Sheriff's Office
Dallas County Sheriff's Office
Dallas Police Department
Decatur Police Department
Deep East Texas Regional Narcotics Task Force
Deer Park Police Department

Del Rio Police Department
Denton Police Department
Diboll Police Department
Dogwood Trails Narcotic Task Force
Duval County Sheriff's Office
Eagle Pass Police Department
Ector County Sheriff's Office
Edinburg Police Department
Ellis County Sheriff's Office
El Paso County Metro Narcotics Task Force
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El Paso Police Department
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Fort Bend County Narcotics Task Force
Fort Stockton Police Department
Fort Worth Police Department
Fredericksburg Police Department
Freestone County Sheriff's Office
Garland Police Department
Gatesville Police Department
Gladewater Police Department
Grand Prairie Police Department
Grapevine Police Department
Gulf Coast Addiction Technology Transfer Center
Gun Barrel City Police Department
Hamilton County Sheriff's Office
Harris County Sheriff's Department

Texas Drug Threat Assessment

Hays County Sheriff's Office
Helotes City Police Department
Hidalgo County Sheriff's Office
Hidalgo Police Department
Highland Village Police Department
Hill County Sheriff's Office
Horizon City Police Department
Houston Police Department
Howard County Sheriff's Office
Hutchinson County Sheriff's Office
Independence Narcotics Task Force
Irving Police Department
Jefferson County Sheriff's Department
 Narcotics Task Force
Jim Wells County Sheriff's Office
Johnson County Sheriff's Office
Kerrville Police Department
Lacy-Lakeview Police Department
Lampasas County Sheriff's Office
Lancaster Police Department
Laredo Police Department
Lavaca County Sheriff's Office
League City Police Department
Livingston Police Department
Longview Police Department
Lubbock Police Department
Luling Police Department
McAllen (Multi-Agency) Intelligence Center

McAllen Police Department
McKinney Police Department
McLennan County Sheriff's Office
Mercedes Police Department
Mesquite Police Department
Mexia Police Department
Midland County Sheriff's Office
Midland Police Department
Midlothian Police Department
Monahans Police Department
Montgomery County Sheriff's Office
Moore County Sheriff's Office
Nassau Bay Police Department
North Richland Hills Police Department
Odessa Police Department
Orange County Sheriff's Office
Orange Police Department
Palmview Police Department
Panhandle Regional Narcotics Task Force
Panola County Sheriff's Office
Pearland Police Department
Pecos County Sheriff's Department
Pecos Police Department
Pecos Valley Drug Task Force
Perryton Police Department
Pharr Police Department
Plainview Police Department

Texas Drug Threat Assessment

Plano Police Department
Presidio County Sheriff's Office
Refugio County Sheriff's Office
Richardson Police Department
Rio Concho Multi-Agency Drug Enforcement Task Force
Rio Grande City Police Department
Rockwall County Sheriff's Office
Roma Police Department
Rural Area Narcotics Task Force-Lampasas
Sachse City Police Department
Saginaw Texas Police Department
San Angelo Police Department
San Antonio Police Department
San Marcos Police Department
Santa Fe City Police Department
Seagoville Police Department
Seguin Police Department
Seminole Police Department
Smith County Sheriff's Office
Smithville Police Department
Snyder Police Department
South Padre Island City Police Department
South Plains Regional Narcotics Task Force
State of Texas
 Department of Public Safety
 Post Seizure Analysis Team
 Texas Commission on Alcohol and Drug Abuse
 Texas Workforce Commission
Sugar Land Police Department

Tarrant County Sheriff's Office

Taylor Police Department

Terrell County Sheriff's Office

Terrell Hills Police Department

Texarkana Police Department

Texas A&M International University

 Texas Center for Border Economic and Enterprise Development

Texas City Police Department

Texas Poison Control Centers

Texas Workforce Commission

Tom Green County Sheriff's Office

Trans Pecos Drug Task Force

Travis County Sheriff's Office

Tri-County Narcotics Task Force

Universal City Police Department

University of Texas at Austin

 Center for Social Work Research, School of Social Work

 Gulf Coast Addiction Technology Transfer Center

University Park Police Department

Uvalde County Sheriff's Office

Victoria Police Department

Waco Police Department

Watauga Department of Public Safety

Webb County Sheriff's Office

Weslaco Police Department

Westside Narcotics Task Force

Wharton Police Department

Wichita Falls Police Department

Texas Drug Threat Assessment

Williamson County Sheriff's Office

Willow Park City Police Department

Wilmer Police Department

Yoakum County Sheriff's Office

National

Executive Office of the President

Office of National Drug Control Policy

High Intensity Drug Trafficking Area

Houston

North Texas

South Texas

Southwest Border

West Texas

U.S. Department of Commerce

Census Bureau

U.S. Department of Health and Human Services

National Institutes of Health

National Institute on Drug Abuse

Community Epidemiology Work Group

Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration

Office of Applied Studies

Drug Abuse Warning Network

National Household Survey on Drug Abuse

Treatment Episode Data Set

U.S. Department of Homeland Security

Directorate of Border and Transportation Security

Bureau of Customs and Border Protection (formerly U.S. Customs Service of the U.S. Department of Treasury and U.S. Border Patrol of the U.S. Department of Justice)

Bureau of Immigration and Customs Enforcement (formerly Immigration and Naturalization Service of the United States Department of Justice)

Air and Marine Interdiction Coordination Center

U.S. Coast Guard

*Contributing agencies formerly known as**U.S. Border Patrol**Del Rio Sector**El Paso Sector**Marfa Sector**McAllen Sector**U.S. Customs Service**South Texas Customs Management Center**Southwest Field Intelligence Unit**West Texas Customs Management Center*

U.S. Department of Justice

Criminal Division

Organized Crime Drug Enforcement Task Force

Drug Enforcement Administration

Dallas Division

Domestic Cannabis Eradication/Suppression Program

Domestic Monitor Program

El Paso Division

El Paso Intelligence Center

National Clandestine Laboratory Seizure System

Operation Convoy

Operation Jetway

Operation Pipeline

Federal-Wide Drug Seizure System

Houston Division

U.S. Attorney's Office

Eastern District of Texas

Northern District of Texas

Southern District of Texas

Western District of Texas

U.S. General Accounting Office

U.S. Sentencing Commission

Other

University of Mississippi

Potency Monitoring Project

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