



The Drug Impact on Montana

- From 2011 – 2013, prescription drug overdoses where no substances other than prescription drugs were present, were responsible for at least 369 deaths and more than 7,200 hospital inpatient admissions and emergency department encounters in our state.
- Montana experienced a ten-fold increase in the number of infants born with Neonatal Abstinence Syndrome (NAS) from 2000 to 2013. NAS occurs most often when a woman takes opioids during pregnancy, meaning her baby develops dependence on opioids while in the womb and will experience withdrawal symptoms at birth. Babies born with NAS can experience ongoing complications, including ongoing cognitive and physical delays.
- The link between prescription painkiller abuse and subsequent or simultaneous heroin abuse continues to grow. Across the country, 80% of “recent heroin initiates had previously used prescription opioids non-medically,” according to the Center for Behavioral Health Statistics and Quality.
- The rate of prescription drug abuse overdose deaths in Montana has doubled since 2000.
- Methamphetamine, guns, and other polydrug shipments are common seizures for the Montana Department of Justice’s Division of Criminal Investigation, Montana Highway Patrol, drug task forces, and local law enforcement in Montana.

- Compared to domestically produced clandestine methamphetamine, Mexican meth is the purest encountered in Montana.
- The majority of meth available in Montana originates in Mexico and is distributed from California and Washington.
- Interstates 15, 25 and 90 are the tertiary routes of transportation into Montana and meth is most commonly concealed within privately owned or rental vehicles. The Montana Highway Patrol has made significant drug seizures as part of their interdiction efforts on our State highways.
- 53% of DCI drug investigations in 2016 were meth related. Seizures and purity levels continue to increase and firearms are commonly found on offenders.
- Meth prices are at an all – time low due to high availability and competing markets between rival Cartels attempting to establish a foothold in Montana.
- Between 2009 and 2015, drug related arrests in Montana have increased 62% and now account for 18% of all arrests. Drug charges are the leading categories for both misdemeanor and felony arrests.
- There are 11 drug task forces in Montana, all reporting methamphetamine as the primary drug encountered.
- According to a National Drug Threat Assessment survey, meth is the drug that most contributes to violent and property crime
- Montana High Intensity Drug Trafficking Area (HIDTA) Task Forces report seizing an average of over 75 pounds of meth per year and an average of 380 arrest annually.

Sources: Center for Behavioral Health Statistics and Quality Montana Department of Justice Division of Criminal Investigation, Montana Highway Patrol, Resolve Montana.