Respiratory Protection for Clandestine Methamphetamine Laboratory Seizures

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Airborne chemical hazards associated with clandestine methamphetamine production can be many and their concentrations can be quite substantial. Studies have shown that during active laboratory operations, concentrations can reach the immediately dangerous to life or health (IDLH) levels. Initial responders to clandestine methamphetamine laboratories often times do not wear proper personal protective equipment including respirators and there is a fear that they are not adequately protected. Studies have shown that the highest level of respiratory protection should be worn during the first response to an active clandestine methamphetamine laboratory. Depending upon circumstances and subsequent airborne monitoring, respiratory protection may be able to be downgraded, but if air monitoring is not conducted, actual concentrations are not known. This presentation will provide a description of a typical METH lab seizure and clean up operations addressing a broad range of chemical hazards, effective respiratory protection, and decontamination.