

ALASKA STATE TROOPERS

Alaska Bureau of Investigation Statewide Drug Enforcement Unit



2014 Annual Drug Report

2014 ANNUAL DRUG REPORT

TABLE OF CONTENTS

<i>INTRODUCTION</i>	<i>2</i>
<i>OUR MISSION.....</i>	<i>2</i>
<i>STAFFING AND SUPPORT.....</i>	<i>3</i>
<i>NATURE OF ALASKA’S DRUG AND ALCOHOL PROBLEM.....</i>	<i>4</i>
<i>DRUGS OF CHOICE</i>	<i>6</i>
<i>ALCOHOL</i>	<i>7</i>
<i>COCAINE</i>	<i>8</i>
<i>HEROIN</i>	<i>9</i>
<i>MARIJUANA.....</i>	<i>10</i>
<i>METHAMPHETAMINE</i>	<i>11</i>
<i>PRESCRIPTION DRUGS.....</i>	<i>12</i>
<i>SDEU ARREST SUMMARY 2014.....</i>	<i>13</i>
<i>LOCAL, STATE, AND FEDERAL AGENCY SEIZURES 2014.....</i>	<i>14</i>
<i>NATIONAL PRESCRIPTION DRUG TAKE BACK PROGRAM.....</i>	<i>16</i>
<i>UNITED STATES COAST GUARD INTERDICTION OPERATION</i>	<i>16</i>
<i>EMERGING TRENDS IN 2014.....</i>	<i>17</i>
<i>SUMMARY.....</i>	<i>20</i>
<i>ADDITIONAL RESOURCES</i>	<i>21</i>

INTRODUCTION

The Alaska State Troopers' Alaska Bureau of Investigation, Statewide Drug Enforcement Unit (SDEU) in authoring this publication, has endeavored to represent the drug and illegal alcohol situation in Alaska in a manner that provides the broadest possible picture of the true illicit drug situation.

There are numerous Municipal, Borough, and Federal agencies that conduct drug investigations in Alaska. While some agencies have less formal relationships with the Department of Public Safety, many work closely and collaboratively with the Alaska State Troopers. In order to properly represent the true drug and illegal alcohol situation in Alaska, statistics from as many agencies in Alaska as possible are included in this report. While we made an effort to provide the most accurate seizure data and made a deliberative effort to avoid duplication, there are instances where a specific seizure may have been counted in more than one report. Information provided by all sources should be considered when attempting to measure how drugs and illegal alcohol are impacting the citizens of this state.

We believe including as much information from all agencies involved in drug and illegal alcohol enforcement in Alaska is vital when analyzing the needs of the state in the arena of drug and illegal alcohol enforcement. However, it is important to note that the numbers alone should not be the sole source from which to make a complete assessment of the true drug and illegal alcohol situation in Alaska. To get the most accurate picture of the illicit drug and alcohol situation within Alaska, we have attempted to take into account the anecdotal information gathered from conversations with those investigators on the frontlines of Alaska's efforts to investigate, document, and apprehend those who have chosen to participate in Alaska's illicit drug and alcohol culture.

OUR MISSION

SDEU provides a team-building role in coordinating law enforcement's efforts to reduce the availability of illegal alcohol and controlled substances throughout Alaska. SDEU recognizes that a successful alcohol and drug interdiction program depends upon a unified effort—blending traditional law enforcement techniques with demand reduction programs that address educational, social, and community concerns.

SDEU's Mission is to:

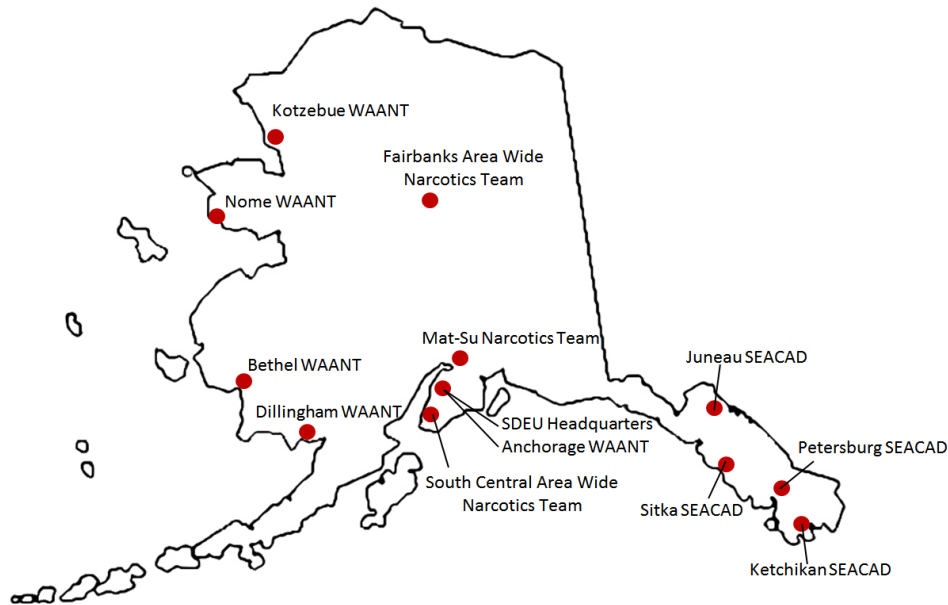
- ❖ Interdict and seize alcohol and controlled substances that are illegally distributed throughout Alaska.
- ❖ Identify and arrest distributors of controlled substances and illegal alcohol.
- ❖ Provide training and investigative support to criminal justice agencies.
- ❖ Support and participate in public education programs.

STAFFING AND SUPPORT

SDEU recognizes that because of Alaska's geographical vastness, no single law enforcement agency is capable of addressing the illegal drug and alcohol issues alone. Using a combination of federal and state funding, the Department of Public Safety helps to fund a number of multi-jurisdictional task forces around the state. SDEU encourages cooperative efforts between federal, state, and local law enforcement agencies and has taken a leadership role in fostering and developing many cooperative arrangements through multi-jurisdictional and/or multi-agency efforts. The ABI-SDEU Headquarters office in Anchorage primarily participates in six (6) investigative task forces throughout the state. These teams are broken down by region as follows:

- ❖ Alaska Interdiction Task Force / Anchorage Enforcement Group (DEA sponsored)
- ❖ Fairbanks Area-wide Narcotics Team
- ❖ Mat-Su Narcotics Enforcement Team
- ❖ South Central Area-wide Narcotics Team
- ❖ Southeast Alaska Cities Against Drugs Task Force
- ❖ Western Alaska Alcohol and Narcotics Team

State Wide Drug Enforcement Unit Map



*Additional specific information on the individual units can be found at:
<http://dps.alaska.gov/AST/ABI/SDEU.aspx>*

SDEU participates with and receives assistance from several investigative agencies involved in drug enforcement. These agencies include the Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA); Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI); the US Postal Inspection Service; the Internal Revenue Service (IRS); Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives (BATFE); Department of Homeland Security (DHS), to include US Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE), and the United States Coast Guard (USCG). SDEU also works closely with other local law enforcement agencies.

NATURE OF ALASKA'S DRUG AND ALCOHOL PROBLEM

Members of Alaska's law enforcement community and others who are part of Alaska's criminal justice system have long known that the greatest contributing factor to violent crimes—including domestic violence and sexual assault—is drug and alcohol abuse. Property crimes such as burglary and theft are also often related to drug and alcohol abuse. It is also widely recognized that many of the accidental deaths that occur in Alaska are related to alcohol use. This is especially true in the western regions of the state and is evident in the statistics entered into the Alaska State Trooper case management systems.

According to the 2012-2013 National Survey on Drug Use and Health, Alaska was ranked as one of the top ten states for rates of illicit drug use in a number of categories. Approximately 13.3 percent of adult Alaska residents reported illicit drug use within the past month (down from 14.45 percent in the 2009-2010 report), while the national average was 9.28 percent (up from 8.82 percent in the 2009-2010 report), ranking Alaska sixth highest in the nation for adult illicit drug use within the past month. Additionally, the National Survey also reported that 12.07 percent of Alaska juveniles used illicit drugs in the past month, compared to the national average of 9.54 percent, ranking Alaska 21st nationally for juvenile use of illicit drugs within the past month.

According to a study completed by the Alaska Justice Statistical Analysis Center that analyzed arrests for drug Offenses in Alaska from 2000-2011, the number of adult arrests for drug offenses increased 34.3 percent during this period (1,486 drug arrests in 2000 to 1,996 drug arrests in 2011). During the same time period, juvenile arrests for drug offenses actually decreased by 19.1 percent (435 drug arrests in 2000, to 352 drug arrests in 2011). Additionally, adult drug offenses accounted for 81.8 percent of the total drug offenses from 2001 through 2011, while juvenile arrests accounted for 18.2 percent.

Drugs and alcohol are also a significant factor in domestic violence and sexual assault in Alaska. According to the 2010 Alaska Victimization Study conducted by the University of Alaska Anchorage, 37.1 percent of adult women in the state of Alaska become victims of sexual violence in their lives—72.2 percent of those are drug or alcohol related sexual assaults. Additionally, alcohol was reported to be a factor in 59 percent of domestic violence cases reported to the Alaska State Troopers from 2001 through 2005, according to a study conducted by UAA. This percentage is significantly higher than national rates, where alcohol was a factor in 42 percent of domestic violence incidents.

While there is no question that many aspects of the drug and alcohol problem are unique to Alaska, SDEU strives to provide a continuing and coordinated effort that not only meets the needs of Alaska, but also supports the National Drug Control Strategy. The strategy underscores the social and economic costs to society and was developed to provide general guidance and a framework for federal, state, and local agencies in developing a counter drug effort. The 2014 National Drug Control Strategy's established objectives are to:

- ❖ Strengthen efforts to prevent drug use in communities
- ❖ Seek early intervention opportunities in health care
- ❖ Integrate treatment for substance use disorders into health care and expand support for recovery

- ❖ Break the cycle of drug use, crime, delinquency, and incarceration
- ❖ Disrupt domestic drug trafficking and production
- ❖ Strengthen international partnerships
- ❖ Improve information systems for analysis, assessment, and local management

<http://www.samhsa.gov/data/sites/default/files/NSDUHStateEst2012-2013-p1/Tables/NSDUHsaePercents2013.pdf>

http://justice.uaa.alaska.edu/ajsac/2014/ajsac.14-03.drug_arrests.pdf

http://justice.uaa.alaska.edu/research/2010/1004.avs_2010/1004.07b.statewide_handout.pdf

http://justice.uaa.alaska.edu/forum/25/3fall2008/a_dvassaults.html

DRUGS OF CHOICE

Alcohol, cocaine, heroin, marijuana, methamphetamine, and prescription drugs have been identified as the primary substances of abuse and are the focus of most Alaskan law enforcement efforts.

During 2014, the Alaska State Troopers did not investigate or respond to a single report of a methamphetamine lab, down from five the previous year. Despite progress in eradicating methamphetamine labs throughout the state and enhanced methamphetamine precursor laws in 2006, methamphetamine continues to be readily available throughout Alaska and arrives mostly from sources outside of the state.

The apparent increase of the abuse of heroin and continued abuse of other opiates (including various opioid based prescription medications) is of significant concern, primarily in the urban areas. Alcohol and marijuana continue to be the overwhelming drugs of choice for rural Alaska; however, seizures of methamphetamine, heroin, and prescription drugs have been increasing in smaller rural communities in 2014.

ALCOHOL

Alaska's criminal justice professionals recognize that alcohol is the primary abused substance in Alaska. It often contributes to many violent, suicidal, and accidental deaths, especially in rural areas. Currently, 108 communities have voted in favor of local option statutes prohibiting the sale, importation, and/or possession of all alcohol. Because alcohol remains legal in many areas of Alaska, illegal bootlegging activities continue to be a problem in the local option communities. Alcohol is frequently transported to the villages via the US Postal Service, local air carriers, private aircraft, boat, snow machines, and express mailing services. Bootlegging alcohol of all types has become a very lucrative business in rural Alaska.

The United States Postal Inspector continues to support the cross deputation of investigators in SDEU's Western Alaska Alcohol and Narcotics Team. This program is believed to be the only one of its kind in the United States.

The economics of the illegal sales of alcohol is staggering. For example, a bootlegger can purchase a 750-milliliter bottle of alcohol, legally, for \$10 or less in an urban liquor store. The same bottle of alcohol in Bethel, Kotzebue, or Barrow may sell for \$50. In more remote communities, alcohol can easily sell for \$150 to over \$300 per bottle, depending on supply and demand. The initial purchase for the bootlegger involves a minimal cash investment yet may yield a significant cash return. A dollar-for-dollar comparison of alcohol and drugs purchased in Anchorage and then resold in many Alaskan villages breaks down as follows:

Substance	Original Cost	Re-Sell Cost
Cocaine	\$1.00	\$1.50
Marijuana	\$1.00	\$4.00
Alcohol	\$1.00	\$15.00*

**Based on \$150.00 per bottle*

<http://commerce.state.ak.us/dnn/Portals/9/pub/Localopt%209-22-14.pdf>

SDEU Alcohol Statistics

Alcohol Seized (Gallons)

2012	2013	2014
473	394	385

Alcohol Related Charges/Arrests

2012	2013	2014
284	214	174

COCAINE

Cocaine continues to be a widely used and lucrative drug for sale in Alaska. Cocaine is readily available in most areas of the state and is seen with great frequency in powder form, and crack cocaine in the major urban areas such as Anchorage and Fairbanks.

Cocaine is brought into Alaska concealed on passengers or in luggage, through ports of entry, such as the Ted Stevens Anchorage International Airport, and it is also shipped via the US Post Office or commercial parcel companies such as FedEx, DHL or UPS.

The cocaine brought into Alaska is typically packaged in kilogram quantities and later broken down by dealers into smaller quantities for retail sale. In powder form, it is normally sold in gram quantities for \$100-150 and its primary method of ingestion is by snorting.

Crack dealers use a process involving powder cocaine, water, baking soda and heat to produce crack cocaine, which is then sold in small rocks for \$20. The primary method of use for crack is by smoking.

The statistics below show powder and crack cocaine seized by all task forces where SDEU investigators are assigned.

SDEU Cocaine Statistics

Cocaine Seized (Pounds)

2012	2013	2014
56	14.58	31.36

Cocaine Related Charges/Arrests

2012	2013	2014
74	37	31



HEROIN

Heroin is a highly addictive drug derived from morphine which is obtained from the opium poppy. It is a “downer” or depressant that affects the brain’s pleasure systems and interferes with the brain’s ability to perceive pain. It is a white to dark brown powder, or a tar-like substance. Heroin can be used in a variety of ways, depending on the user’s preference and the purity of the drug. Heroin can be injected into a vein or muscle, smoked in a water pipe or standard pipe, mixed in a marijuana joint or regular cigarette, inhaled as smoke through a straw, or snorted as a powder via the nose.

The short term effects of heroin abuse appear soon after a single dose and disappear after a few hours. After an injection of heroin, the user reports feeling a surge of euphoria accompanied by a warm flushing of the skin, a dry mouth, and heavy extremities.

Heroin use is not isolated to the urban areas of Alaska. Undercover buys and interdictions of heroin have been reported in several smaller communities. Heroin is primarily imported into Alaska via parcels and body carries. Investigations have shown that heroin use crosses socio-economic boundaries.

SDEU Heroin Statistics

Heroin Seized (Pounds)

2012	2013	2014
4.93	55.12	22.42

Heroin Charges/Arrests

2012	2013	2014
146	151	209



MARIJUANA

Marijuana is available throughout the state and is often viewed as a gateway drug to other drugs for young adults and teenagers. The 2011 Alaska Youth Risk Behavior Survey conducted by State of Alaska Department of Health and Social Services indicates that 21.2% of high school students used marijuana within the last 30 days. Demand for Alaskan-grown marijuana continues to be high as a result of its exceptional tetrahydrocannabinol (THC) content. Because Alaskan produced marijuana is extremely high quality; Alaska is considered a marijuana exporting state. However, there is also a significant market for “BC Bud” brought into Alaska from British Columbia, Canada.

SDEU teams continue to find extremely sophisticated indoor growing operations. Most commercial marijuana growing operations are found in communities along Alaska’s road system. It is not unusual for sites to be located in homes with hidden or underground rooms specifically designed for the cultivation of marijuana. These rooms are often equipped with surveillance cameras and state-of-the-art timers controlling temperature, lighting, water, humidity and air purifiers. Many grows are found during and/or after fires. Also, many lease/rental and abandoned houses are damaged by the remodeling and humidity of a grow operation.

The Drug Enforcement Administration awarded \$70,000 in Marijuana Eradication grant funds to the State of Alaska in 2014. These funds were used to cover some of the costs associated with marijuana eradication in the state. Local police departments were notified of the availability of these funds to cover overtime incurred by officers involved in eradication operations. In 2014, one police agency requested use of these funds from AST.

SDEU Marijuana Statistics

Processed Marijuana Seized (Pounds)

2012	2013	2014
407.03	295.79	169.65

Marijuana Related Charges/Arrests

2012	2013	2014
817	669	716

Marijuana Grows Eradicated

2012	2013	2014
65	38	38

Marijuana Plants Seized

2012	2013	2014
5,090	2,351	2,621

METHAMPHETAMINE

Methamphetamine use continues to be an issue throughout the United States including Alaska. Methamphetamine, also known as meth, speed, crank, crystal, and ice, produces an increase in energy and alertness and a decrease in appetite. The effects, which include an intense rush, have been reported to last up to 36 hours. It can be smoked, snorted, injected, or taken orally.

The collection of hazardous materials associated with the seizure of a methamphetamine lab requires certified clean-up professionals to respond to the location to collect and containerize large items as well as various chemicals found at the site. These containers are then transported to a location for safe, long-term storage or destruction.

Methamphetamine labs have been discovered in recent years in single and multi-family residences in many neighborhoods. In addition to meth labs producing illegal—and often deadly—drugs, the clandestine nature of the manufacturing process and the presence of ignitable, corrosive, reactive, and toxic chemicals at the sites, have resulted in explosions, fires, toxic fumes, and irreparable damage to human health and to the environment. Homes where methamphetamine labs are present are reported to the Alaska Department of Environmental Conservation which maintains an online listing of these addresses, a link to which can be found below. Reoccupation of these properties often requires expensive remediation.

SDEU Meth Statistics

Meth Labs Seized

2012	2013	2014
3	5	0

Meth Seized (Pounds)

2012	2013	2014
35.19	11.53	31.15

Meth Related Charges/Arrests

2012	2013	2014
182	187	232

http://dec.alaska.gov/spar/perp/methlab/methlab_listing.htm

For more information regarding meth education and awareness, go to: www.montanameth.org, www.mfiles.org, www.lifeormeth.org



PRESCRIPTION DRUGS

Throughout the state, the abuse of prescription drugs continues to be a significant problem. Not only does the abuse of prescription drugs create a health hazard for the users, it creates a financial impact upon the communities. The drugs vary in price and can cost anywhere from one dollar per milligram to two dollars per milligram depending on availability. With the increased demand for the drugs and a shortening of supply, many abusers may not have the money or insurance to pay for their addiction, thus increasing property and violent crimes in these communities. It has been reported that tens of thousands of dollars are being spent to feed this growing abuse and addiction.

The abuse of OxyContin/Oxycodone and Hydrocodone and other opioid type medications continued to be a significant issue in 2014. These drugs are sought for their pharmaceutical purity and ability to alter the central nervous system.

Prescription drugs have been linked to the following crimes: homicide, assault, prescription fraud, home invasion thefts, property thefts and pharmacy robberies. People who are addicted to prescription drugs facilitate their addiction by doctor shopping, pharmacy shopping, forgery, and purchasing the drugs via the internet. Law enforcement is especially concerned for the welfare of particularly vulnerable populations, such as the elderly, and those with severe long-term illnesses such as cancer.

It is the intent of SDEU to increase pressure on those involved in the non-medical use, abuse, and sales of these addictive drugs, by applying tried and true narcotics investigation techniques, and whenever prudent, partnering with the DEA and FBI to charge these crimes in the federal system.

SDEU Prescription Drug Statistics

Hydrocodone Seized (Dosage Units)

2012	2013	2014
141	1311	796

OxyContin/Oxycodone Seized (Dosage Units)

2012	2013	2014
609	1419	1183

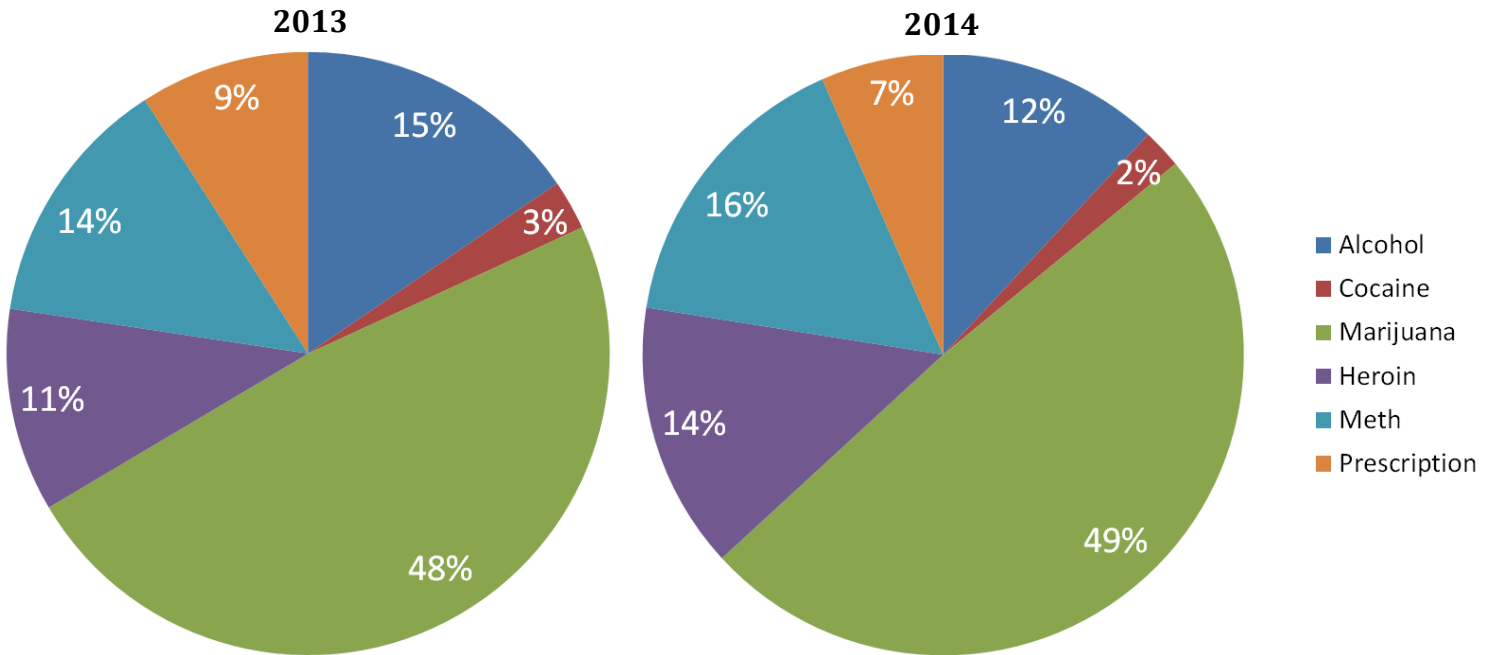
All Other Prescription Drugs Seized (Dosage Units)

2012	2013	2014
2,839	2,485	955

SDEU ARREST SUMMARY 2014

Charges & Arrests Previous Year Comparison

SDEU Charges and Arrests by Drug Type



SDEU Charges and Arrests per Year*

Substance	2013	2014	Change from Previous Year	
Alcohol	214	174	↓	-22.99%
Cocaine	37	31	↓	-19.35%
Heroin	151	209	↑	27.75%
Marijuana	669	716	↑	6.65%
Meth	187	232	↑	19.40%
Prescription	126	96	↓	-31.25%

**Statistics represent charges and arrests by SDEU only*

LOCAL, STATE, AND FEDERAL AGENCY SEIZURES 2014

	Local Agency Seizures 2014													
	Anchorage PD		Kodiak PD		Homer PD		Kenai PD		Kotzebue PD		Wasilla PD		Juneau PD	
Substance	Qty	Street Value	Qty	Street Value	Qty	Street Value	Qty	Street Value	Qty	Street Value	Qty	Street Value	Qty	Street Value
Cocaine (g)	6914.21	\$1,037,151.50	6	\$3,000.00			0.20	\$25.00	3.9	\$1,500.00			24.7	\$2,470.00
Crack Cocaine (g)	414.34	\$124,302.00	42	\$10,500.00										
Hash (g)	31.83	\$1,272.00	18	\$1,800.00							1	\$50.00	33	\$2,500.00
Heroin (g)	6883.57	\$3,441,785.00	160	\$80,000.00	5.1	\$2,550.00	17.8	\$7,120.00			12.8	\$5,116.00	4650	\$4,650,000.00
LSD*	1	\$50.00											11	\$165.00
Marijuana (g)	63927.74	\$722,347.39	907	\$27,210.00	85.06	\$1,701.20	101.65	\$2,033.00	25.1	\$2,510.00	310.4	\$6,208.80	15285	\$458,542.00
MDMA*	26	\$520.00											35	\$1,725.00
Meth (g)	6375.5	\$637,549.90	930	\$279,000.00	4.22	\$422.00	12.49	\$2,498.00			78	\$15,600.00	3631	\$635,446.00
Psilocybin (g)	154.53	\$1,626.00											5	\$225.00
Spice (g)	1114.68	\$11,146.80					7	**						
Alprazolam/Xanax*	336	\$3,360.00					100	**			52	\$520.00		
Buprenorphine*	35	\$350.00									15	\$225.00		
Diazepam*	14	\$140.00					1	**						
Clonazepam/Valium*	106	\$1,060.00					2	**			145	\$1,450.00	40	\$366.00
Fentanyl*	3	\$300.00			9	**							400	\$1,600.00
Hydrocodone/Vicodin*	448	\$2,340.00	10	\$1,000.00			38	\$760.00			86.5	\$865.00	323	\$12,920.00
Methadone*	242	\$2,420.00					9	\$180.00			17	\$170.00		
Morphine*	15	\$2,420.00			1	\$20.00	6	\$120.00					117	\$7,020.00
Oxycodone*	602	\$194,560.00	20	\$2,400.00			3	\$60.00			58	\$580.00	11	\$1,320.00
Suboxone*	94	\$940.00			3	\$30.00					15.3	\$152.50		
Zolpidem/Ambien*	112	\$560.00									26	\$520.00		
		\$6,186,200.59		\$404,910.00		\$4,723.20		\$12,796.00		\$4,010.00		\$31,457.30		\$5,774,299.00

*dosage unit

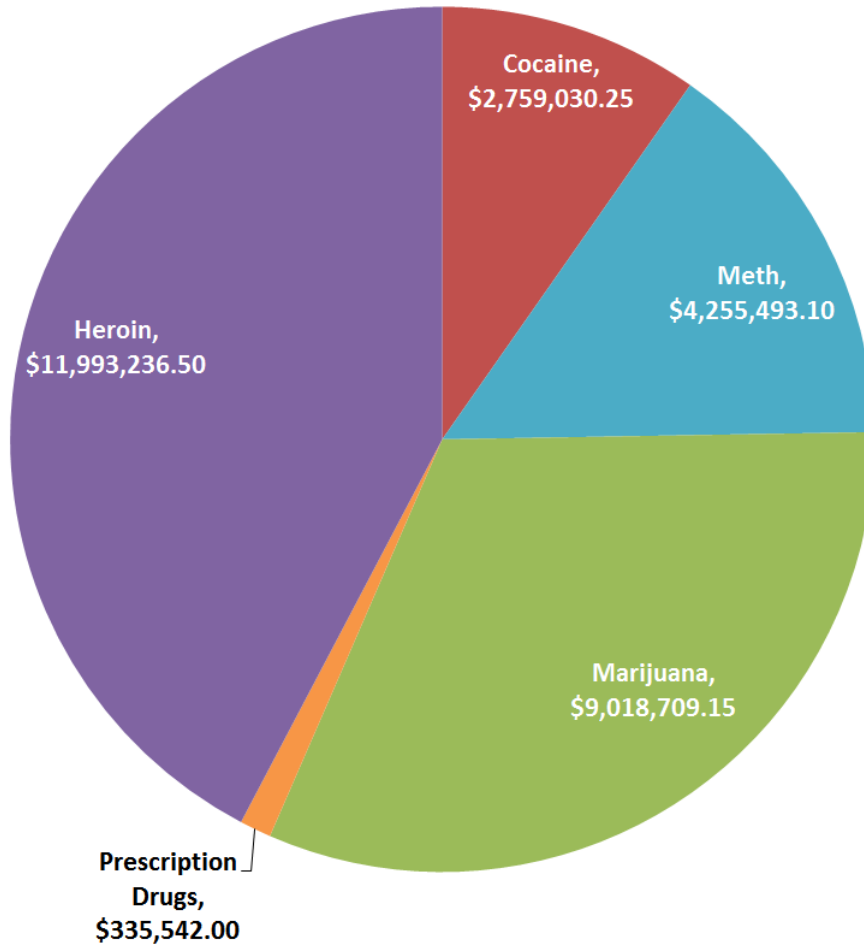
**data not available

State and Federal Drug Seizures 2014				
Substance	SDEU		FBI	
	Qty	Street Value	Qty	Street Value
Cocaine (g)	14224.66	\$1,424,326.75	1246.20	\$155,755.00
Heroin (g)	10169.54	\$3,666,565.50	700.50	\$140,100.00
Meth (g)	14129.4	\$2,221,577.20	2317.00	\$463,400.00
Marijuana (g)	76951.95	\$2,496,908.76	12.4	\$248.00
Marijuana Plants (ea)	2621	\$5,301,000.00		
Prescription Drugs (dose)	2934	\$94,813.50		

Agency Type	Street Value
Local	\$ 12,418,396.09
State	\$ 15,205,191.71
Federal	\$ 759,503.00
TOTAL	\$ 28,383,090.80

“Drugs of Choice”: Total Street Value of Seizures
(Local, State, and Federal Seizures)

Substance	Street Value*
Cocaine/Crack Cocaine	\$ 2,759,030.25
Methamphetamine	\$ 4,255,493.10
Heroin	\$ 11,993,236.50
Prescription Drugs	\$ 335,542.00
Marijuana	\$ 9,018,709.15



**Geographic area street values are estimates only. Street value was determined by the Western States Information Network's Drug Price and Purity Guide 2013, or provided by the local agency. The street value of prescription medications can vary widely depending upon dosage strength. When street value could not be accurately determined, it was not included in this report.*

NATIONAL PRESCRIPTION DRUG TAKE BACK PROGRAM

This initiative addresses a vital public safety and public health issue. More than seven million Americans currently abuse prescription drugs, according to the 2009 Substance Abuse and Mental Health Administration's National Survey on Drug Use and Health. Each day approximately 2,500 teens use prescription drugs to get high for the first time, according to the Partnership for a Drug Free America. Studies show that a majority of abused prescription drugs are obtained from family and friends, including the home medicine cabinet.

In an effort to address this problem, the US Department of Justice, Drug Enforcement Administration, Office of Diversion Control, in conjunction with state and local law enforcement agencies throughout the United States, conducted the first ever National Prescription Drug Take Back Day on Saturday, September 25, 2010. The purpose of this National Take Back Day was to provide a venue for persons who wanted to dispose of unwanted and unused prescription drugs. This effort was a huge success in removing potentially dangerous prescription drugs—particularly controlled substances—from our nation's medicine cabinets. There were approximately 3,000 state and local law enforcement agencies throughout the nation that participated in the event. All told, the American public turned in more than 121 tons of pills on this first National Take Back Day.

Members from the Alaska State Troopers along with the Drug Enforcement Administration, other Alaskan law enforcement agencies and other professional and community organizations worked together in April and again in September of 2014 to facilitate "Prescription Drug Take Back Days." The September program alone resulted in the collection and proper disposal of 2,300 pounds—over one ton—of prescription medications from around the state.

UNITED STATES COAST GUARD INTERDICTION OPERATION

In 2014, from August 1 through September 30, the United States Coast Guard conducted a concerted narcotics interception effort, with the assistance of other federal and local law enforcement in both the states of Washington and Alaska. The operation focused primarily on maritime based trafficking on passenger vessels. The total amount of seizures by the USCG and supporting entities during this event were estimated to be over 29 ounces of methamphetamines, 11.5 pounds of marijuana, and 100 grams of heroin.

EMERGING TRENDS IN 2014

It is the intent of this section to familiarize the reader with some current and anticipated trends within Alaska. To do so, it is important to look at the current Pacific Region picture, as Alaska tends to follow suit in the following years. The National Drug threat Assessment Summary breaks the nation down into eight regions; the Pacific Region is comprised of Alaska, Washington, Oregon, Idaho, Nevada, Hawaii, Guam and Northern and Central California.

PACIFIC REGION TRENDS

Methamphetamine

According to the DEA's 2014 National Drug Threat Assessment, 77% of Pacific Region survey respondents report high availability of methamphetamine in their areas. It is further reported that the supply of Mexican methamphetamine is increasing in the United States. Seizures of methamphetamine coming across the Southwest border have increased 18.5% between calendar year 2012 and 2013.

Powder Cocaine

The National Drug Threat Assessment identifies powder cocaine as a significant issue in the Pacific Region as well. The national trend for 2014 showed that the availability of cocaine in the United States as a whole has slightly increased. Cocaine is smuggled into the United States by Mexican drug trafficking organizations who supply independent dealers and street gangs with the powder cocaine which they often process into crack cocaine prior to distribution.

Marijuana

Marijuana is the most widely available and commonly abused drug throughout the Pacific Region. The Pacific Region leads the country in marijuana cultivation.

In November of 2014, Alaska voters passed Ballot Measure 2, an initiative to legalize recreational use of marijuana, allowing for the regulation and taxation of the drug in a manner similar to alcohol. The initiative will make use and possession of up to one ounce of marijuana legal for persons over the age of 21, beginning February 24, 2015.

ALASKA TRENDS

Methamphetamine

In July of 2006, pseudoephedrine regulations were adopted by the State of Alaska. This armed law enforcement professionals with a valuable tool to combat meth labs in the state. The table below shows the number of reported meth labs seized by SDEU.

Reported Meth Labs Seized in Alaska

2010	2011	2012	2013	2014
11	8	3	5	0

**statistics represent labs seized by SDEU only*

Although we have witnessed a decrease in the number of methamphetamine labs since 2006, SDEU has some concern of the recent popularity of a new method in producing methamphetamine known as the “One Pot” or “Shake and Bake” method. All of the labs encountered by the SDEU in 2013 employed the “One Pot” method. No methamphetamine labs were located by Alaska law enforcement in 2014.

Methamphetamine cooks using the one pot method combine ammonium nitrate or sulfate, pseudoephedrine tablets, ether, water, and the reactive metal into one container (typically a plastic soda bottle) from the beginning of the process. The intent is to reduce the amount of time needed for the overall process. The dangers to the cooks and to first responders are due to the mixing of all of the ingredients in one container. The concentration of products builds pressure within the sealed container to levels beyond which the containers were built to withstand. The building pressure along with the violent reaction of the reactive metal with water can create a rupture or bursting of the container, exposing the inner ingredients to the outside air. Beyond the damage that is created by the bursting container, these ruptures are often accompanied by flames resulting from the flammable liquid within the container. As this method begins to gain in popularity within Alaska, it will increase the danger to all citizens of Alaska from explosions, fires, and exposure to dangerous chemicals.

The number of methamphetamine lab seizures in nearly every other region of the country has shown a steady increase over the last three years, due primarily to one pot labs.

As previously mentioned in this publication, methamphetamine abuse remains a significant issue within Alaska. Although the number of labs has remained low, it appears that use and abuse of the drug lingers.

Prescription Medication

More and more, prescription medications are being abused and sold. SDEU continued to see significant seizures of prescription medications in 2014. It is believed that the largest portion of these medications is being obtained through illegal means.

The 2014 National Drug Threat Assessment Summary prepared by the DEA, notes that prescription drug abuse is the nation’s fastest growing drug problem. Opioid pain relievers such as hydrocodone and oxycodone are the most widely misused. Controlled prescription drug abuse accounts for more deaths in all of the United States than heroin and cocaine combined.

Heroin

The number of heroin seizures in our urban and rural areas continues to grow. SDEU recognizes that there has been an increase in the availability of heroin throughout the state and it is no longer isolated to the urban areas.

The State Medical Examiner’s office continues to see a significant number of deaths where heroin and other opiates are listed as the cause.

Synthetic Cannabinoids

Synthetic cannabis is a term used to describe a variety of a psychoactive herbal and chemical substances which, when consumed mimic the effects of smoking marijuana. Marketed as incense and herbs, these products are sold on the internet and in smoke shops.

Although complete studies have not been conducted, some of the side effects of synthetic cannabis consumption are heart palpitations, extreme agitation, vomiting, delusions, hallucinations, and panic attacks.

In July of 2011, Alaska passed legislation prohibiting the sale and possession of a number of the common chemical compounds found in these synthetic cannabinoids was enacted.

In October of 2014, Alaska legislation prohibited the improper packaging of “spice”. This law greatly hindered the ability for synthetic cannabinoids to be sold in Alaska. There still are individuals shipping “spice” into Alaska however, predominately through the USPS.

Bath Salts

Products containing MDPV (3,4 methylenedioxypropylone)—marketed as “legal alternatives to cocaine or Ecstasy (MDMA)” emerged in the U.S. designer drug market during 2009. These synthetic cathinone type products have caused users throughout the country to experience severe adverse effects, and the number of calls to U.S. poison control centers related to them has trended upward. Retailers often sell these products labeled as “bath salts.”

In 2012, state legislation banning the substances most commonly found in these substances was enacted.

SUMMARY

The Statewide Drug Enforcement Unit has a unique ability to interdict and investigate cases across the state. We also recognize that substance abuse is not confined by any one geographical location or economic strata. Drug and alcohol abuse affects all Alaskans, despite social, ethnic, racial, and economic differences.

We also recognize that the ill-gotten gains of drug traffickers and alcohol smugglers promote an increase in lawlessness of all types. This lawlessness is not isolated to the use of controlled substances; it includes, but is not limited to, burglary, theft, domestic violence, assault, and homicide. Through the eradication of such activity, and the arrest of those who would profit off the misery of others, we will make Alaska a better, safer place to live and to raise a family. The Alaska Bureau of Investigation, along with partner agencies across the state, diligently dedicates resources and energy towards this goal.

The Statewide Drug Enforcement Unit is committed to working with interested agencies in the fight against substance abuse. We accomplish this through the utilization of innovative concepts to combat the illegal sale and distribution of alcohol and drugs. We are also committed to increasing awareness and knowledge of drug abuse through educational presentations to the Public Safety Academy and in public forums, such as schools, service organizations, and other community groups.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

- ❖ Office of National Drug Control Policy 2014
<http://www.whitehousedrugpolicy.gov/index.html>
- ❖ Drug Enforcement Administration: National Drug Threat Assessment Summary
<http://www.dea.gov/resource-center/dir-ndta-unclass.pdf>
- ❖ Center for Substance Abuse Research
<http://www.cesar.umd.edu/>
- ❖ U.S. Department of Health and Human Services
<http://www.oas.samhsa.gov/nhsda.htm>
- ❖ The Partnership for Drug Free Kids
<http://www.drugfree.org/drug-guide>
- ❖ Department of Health and Social Services : Youth Risk Behavior Survey
<http://dhss.alaska.gov/dph/Chronic/Pages/yrbs/yrbsresults.aspx>
- ❖ Office of Diversional Control
<http://www.deadiversion.usdoj.gov>

The 2014 Annual Drug Report is authored by the Alaska State Troopers, Alaska Bureau of Investigation Statewide Drug Enforcement Unit. It can be accessed via the Department of Public Safety internet site therefore there is no publication cost. It is intended to inform Alaskans about the type and frequency of drug related crime reported in Alaska during 2014.

The Alaska State Troopers, Alaska Bureau of Investigation supplied the majority of information presented in this report. Statistical data was provided by the Alaska State Troopers, Alaska Bureau of Investigation, Federal Bureau of Investigation, United States Coast Guard, Anchorage Police Department, Kodiak Police Department, Wasilla Police Department, Kotzebue Police Department, Kenai Police Department, Homer Police Department, and Juneau Police Department.