



MEMORANDUM

DATE: March 1, 2020
TO: Mayor and City Council
FROM: Mike Lester, Assistant Chief, VPD
RE: **VPD Drug Enforcement Activities**
CC: Eric Holmes, City Manager

This memo is intended to provide Mayor and Council background information relevant to the March 1, 2021, Council workshop on VPD Drug Enforcement Activities.

The Vancouver Police Department conducts narcotic investigations at different levels within the organization. Some investigations are conducted at the patrol level during traffic stops and calls for service, other investigations are conducted as part of an officer/detective job duties related to the unit they are assigned. An example would be the Clark/Vancouver Drug Task Force, Safe Streets Task Force or the Neighborhood Response Team.

There is no one size-fits-all approach to addressing substance abuse in our community. This is a social issue that has been address through various and changing means over the past several decades. While it has continued to be handled by law enforcement practices, the emphasis has changed toward treatment and counseling programs versus incarceration where situations make the best sense. Today, we work cooperatively with our law enforcement partners, courts, and social services to address this issue in a holistic, integrated, and partnership-based approach. The below information will provide additional information on mission statements, drug definitions, relevant terminology, and the relationship between drugs and crime.

Clark-Vancouver Drug Task Force

- Goals
 - The Clark-Vancouver Regional Drug Task Force (CVRDTF) prioritizes investigations to reach the following goals:
 - To identify, investigate, and disrupt or dismantle drug trafficking organizations working in and through Clark County. To initiate and conduct investigations of

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mid and upper-level drug traffickers. To facilitate investigation and problem-solving efforts relating to neighborhood drug problems. To promote the following

- inter-agency cooperation.
- interdisciplinary cooperation fighting drugs in our communities.
- collect, analyze and disseminate intelligence information relating to illegal drug activities.
- to be an educational and information resource for our community partner.

- Vision

- Drug free communities

- Mission

- It is the mission of the Clark-Vancouver Regional Drug Task Force to work proactively and collaboratively with our community partners to eliminate illegal drugs in Clark County with Professionalism, Integrity, Responsiveness and Enthusiasm.

Safe Streets Task Force

- Mission

- The mission of the FBI Safe Streets Task Force (SSTF) is to identify and target, for prosecution, criminal enterprise groups responsible for drug trafficking, money laundering, crimes of violence such as murder and aggravated assault, robbery, violent street gangs, and violent fugitives.

Neighborhood Response Team

- Mission

- The Neighborhood Response Teams (NRT) address community livability issues through focused and proactive enforcement. As a street level investigative team, they support both patrol and other investigation units as needed.

Drug Definitions and Current Trends

Heroin

- Heroin is an opioid drug made from morphine, a natural substance taken from the seed pod of the various opium poppy plants grown in Southeast and Southwest Asia, Mexico, and Columbia. Heroin can be white or brown powder, or a black sticky substance known as black tar heroin. In 2019, the National Center for Health Statistics (NCHS) reported 46,802 overdose deaths involving opioids.

Methamphetamine

- Methamphetamine is a powerful, highly addictive stimulant that affects the central nervous system. Crystal methamphetamine is a form of the drug that looks like glass fragments or shiny, bluish-white rocks. It is chemically similar to amphetamine, a drug used to treat attention-deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) and narcolepsy, a sleep disorder. According to the Department of Justice, high doses of methamphetamine may result in death from stroke, heart attack, or multiple organ problems caused by overheating.

Fentanyl

- Fentanyl is a powerful synthetic opioid that is similar to morphine but is 50 to 100 times more potent. It is a prescription drug that is also made and used illegally. Additionally, counterfeit pain pills and sedatives are flooding the illegal drug market and causing a significant number of fatal overdose deaths. These dangerous substances contain fentanyl, a powerful opioid 100 times more potent than morphine. Supplied by Mexican drug cartels, or coming directly from China, these pills look identical to legitimate medications such as hydrocodone, Xanax or other medications often prescribed for pain or anxiety. Based on a sampling of tablets seized nationwide in 2019, DEA found that 27 percent contained potentially lethal doses of fentanyl.

Relevant Terminology

- **Drug-Defined Offenses:** Violations of laws prohibiting or regulating the possession, distribution, or manufacture of illegal drugs.
 - Ex. Drug possession or use. Marijuana cultivation. Methamphetamine production. Cocaine, heroin, or illegal marijuana sales.
- **Drug-Related:** Offenses in which drugs pharmacologic effects contribute; offenses are motivated by the user's need for money to support continued use; and offenses connected to drug distribution itself.
 - Ex. Violent behavior resulting from drug effects. Stealing to get money to buy drugs. Violence against rival drug dealers.

Relationship between Drugs and Crime

- Drugs are also related to crime through the effects they have on the user’s behavior and by engaging in violence and other illegal activity in connection with drug trafficking.
- It is a criminal offense to use, possess, manufacture, or distribute illegal drugs.
 - Cocaine, heroin, marijuana, and amphetamines are examples of drugs classified to have abuse potential.

Child Protective Services (CPS)

RCW 26.44.020-Neglect Referrals Defined

In part, this section states, “When considering whether a clear and present danger exists, evidence of a parent's substance abuse as a contributing factor to negligent treatment or maltreatment shall be given great weight.”