

CANNABIS CULTIVATIONS AND THE RISK TO YOU AND OUR COMMUNITIES

Following the reclassification of cannabis in January 2004, there has been a steady increase in the number of cannabis cultivation sites discovered across Scotland.

Of particular concern are the large cannabis cultivations being discovered in converted domestic housing stock. This type of cannabis cultivation is predominantly being carried out by South East Asian Organised Crime Groups. Of those involved, most if not all, are South East Asian appearance, mainly Chinese and Vietnamese. These cannabis cultivations are happening in our communities and it is vital that members of the public come forward with information to assist police in targeting this criminal activity.

SIGNS TO WATCH OUT FOR AT THE PROPERTY:

- The windows of the property are permanently covered from the inside
- Visits to the premises occur at unusual times of the day or night
- People often do not live in the premises and only visit to maintain them
- Visitors may call daily or weekly, but usually do not stay long
- The cannabis or by-products such as used fertiliser will be removed in black bin bags/ laundry bags/suitcases
- Compost bags or gardening equipment may be left outside, usually in the rear of the premises
- There may be a vent protruding through the roof or a rear window
- There may be a pungent smell emanating from the premises
- There may be noise coming from the equipment in the premises (cooling fans)
- Never gaining access for inspection checks

Notwithstanding the obvious criminality, there is a serious threat to public health and safety from the risk of fire. Cultivations require heat and this is achieved by converting a normal house into a green house and bypassing the electricity supply directly from the mains. This can include major changes to the house including removal of walls and electrical installations. Houses have been damaged by fire from faulty equipment or deliberately to cover the tracks of the tenants prior to a police raid. Repairs to the damage can run into the 10's of thousands of pounds once the landlord recovers possession of the property.

HOW TO TELL IF THE TENANT IS SUSPECT

- The rent is paid in cash for the full period of the rental
- Requested background checks are not undertaken or reach a dead end
- Promised references not being provided
- No bank details given as rent paid cash
- Only telephone number given for previous landlord for checks

WHAT CAN YOU DO TO PREVENT THIS

- Do not accept rent in cash -insist it is paid through a bank
- Be wary of short term lets without rigorous vetting of prospective tenants
- Ensure you inspect the premises regularly
- Do not allow sub-letting
- Take a copy of the photo ID for tenants i.e. passport, driving licence
- Ensure identification is genuine
- Watch for utility bill in different names
- Require more than one type of identification for joint applicants
- Check prospective tenants current address
- Obtain mobile phone numbers and car registration numbers

If you suspect your property is being used as a cannabis factory contact the police immediately.

DO NOT ATTEMPT TO ENTER THE PROPERTY YOURSELF AS IT MAY HAVE BEEN BOOBY-TRAPPED.

CRIMINAL ACTIVITY

Single cultivations have been discovered with over 800 plants, giving a yield value in the region of £365,000. Considering it only takes three months to grow the plants, literally millions of pounds are being made. The wholesale production of cannabis presents a real threat to Scotland's communities, where cannabis is the most widely abused illegal drug. Tayside Police needs you to tell you your staff about these risks and to be vigilant when carrying out day to day routines and be aware of the **TELL TALE SIGNS**. If you have any suspicions please contact Tayside Police 101 or Crimestoppers on 0800 555 111 where anonymity can be maintained.

