

Office of National Drug Control Policy

Drug Policy Information Clearinghouse

San Diego, California

Profile of Drug Indicators

February 2005



ONDCP Drug Policy Information Clearinghouse staff compiled this profile by using the most recent data available from open sources. The data presented are as accurate as the sources from which they were drawn. The information contained in this profile should not be used to rank or compare States or jurisdictions, due to differences in data collection and reporting methods.

San Diego, California

The following profile contains information on demographics, political figures, programs, crime, drug use, drug trafficking, and enforcement statistics.

Demographics

- Population (2003 American Community Survey): 1,220,734¹
- Race/Ethnicity (2003 American Community Survey): 49.9% white; 7.0% black/African American; 0.3% American Indian/Alaska Native; 14.3% Asian; 0.4% Native Hawaiian/other Pacific Islander; 0.0% some other race; 1.8% two or more races; 26.4% Hispanic/Latino (of any race)²
- The city of San Diego is located in San Diego County.

Politics

- Mayor: Dick Murphy³
- City Manager: P. Lamont Ewell⁴
- City Council (Districts 1-8, respectively): Scott Peters, Michael Zucchet, Toni Atkins, Tony Young, Brian Maienschein, Donna Frye, Jim Madaffer, Ralph Inzunza⁵
- San Diego Police Chief: William Lansdowne⁶
- San Diego County Sheriff: William Kolender⁷

Programs/Initiatives

- High Intensity Drug Trafficking Area (HIDTA)⁸
The Southwest Border HIDTA California Regional Partnership, known as California Border Alliance Group (CBAG), was designated in 1990 as one of the five partnerships of the Southwest Border HIDTA. The geographic area of responsibility of CBAG is San Diego and Imperial Counties.
- Landlord Training Program⁹
The Landlord Training Program was designed to promote positive and responsible partnerships between landlords, tenants, and the San Diego Police. These partnerships are vital to effectively preventing drug dealing and other illegal activities at rental properties located within San Diego neighborhoods.
- Clean Syringe Exchange Pilot Program¹⁰
The City of San Diego developed a one-year Clean Syringe Exchange Pilot Program with a drug abuse treatment referral component in response to a public health crisis relating to the rapid spread of Hepatitis C and HIV through the shared use of needles and syringes.

Crime and Drug-Related Crime

- During 2003, there were 65 murders known to police in San Diego. This is an increase over the 47 murders known to police in 2002.¹¹

Number of Index Offenses Known to Police, San Diego, 1999-2003

Offense	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003
Murder	57	54	51	47	65
Rape	354	349	342	330	406
Robbery	1,812	1,777	1,729	1,627	1,626
Aggravated assault	5,187	4,980	5,284	5,189	5,269
Burglary	6,568	6,717	7,219	7,639	8,076
Larceny	26,117	23,015	25,050	24,577	25,739
Vehicle theft	9,490	9,469	10,770	10,715	12,567
Crime index total	49,585	46,361	50,445	50,124	53,748

- Approximately 67% of San Diego adult male arrestees and 69% of adult female arrestees tested in 2003 were positive for drugs.¹²

Percent of Arrestees Testing Positive for Drugs, San Diego, 2003

	Male	Female
Cocaine	10.3%	15.2%
Marijuana	41.0	29.1
Methamphetamine	36.2	47.1
Heroin	5.1	8.7
Any drug	66.8	69.1
Multiple drugs	23.9	24.3

- Additional San Diego arrestee data for 2003 indicate that 51.5% of adult male arrestees reported using marijuana within the past year. Among the male arrestees reporting past year marijuana use, the average number of days the substance was used in the past month was 9.1 days.¹³

Adult Male Arrestee Past Drug Use, San Diego, 2003

Use	Crack Cocaine	Powder Cocaine	Marijuana	Meth.	Heroin
Past 7 days	5.7%	3.2%	38.3%	27.8%	3.9%
Past 30 days	7.1%	4.2%	44.9%	31.1%	4.7%
Past year	10.4%	8.4%	51.5%	36.8%	7.4%
Avg. # of days used in month	4.5	2.6	9.1	8.6	5.5

- Approximately 45% of the San Diego adult female arrestees reported using marijuana within the past year. These arrestees used the drug an average of 8 days within the past month.¹⁴

Adult Female Arrestee Past Drug Use, San Diego, 2003

Use	Crack Cocaine	Powder Cocaine	Marijuana	Meth.	Heroin
Past 7 days	12.2%	3.1%	32.7%	35.5%	6.4%
Past 30 days	13.5%	4.4%	38.0%	38.2%	6.8%
Past year	18.5%	10.1%	45.3%	44.4%	8.1%
Avg. # of days used in month	8.4	3.9	8.0	9.3	10.5

- There were 1,136 juvenile and 3,852 adult misdemeanor drug arrests for marijuana in San Diego County during 2003.¹⁵

Number of Misdemeanor Drug Arrests, San Diego County, 2001-2003

Offense	2001		2002		2003	
	Juvenile	Adult	Juvenile	Adult	Juvenile	Adult
Marijuana	1,293	3,472	1,153	3,703	1,136	3,852
Other drugs	267	7,598	257	7,988	289	8,697
Glue sniffing	2	9	3	5	1	2

- During 2003, there were 419 juvenile and 9,948 adult felony drug arrests in San Diego County.¹⁶

Number of Felony Drug Arrests, San Diego County, 2001-2003

Offense	2001		2002		2003	
	Juvenile	Adult	Juvenile	Adult	Juvenile	Adult
Narcotics	79	2,553	81	2,659	68	2,719
Marijuana	179	701	178	670	161	729
Dangerous drugs	165	5,284	152	5,375	184	6,395
Other	8	124	5	85	6	105
Total	431	8,662	416	8,789	419	9,948

Drugs

- Cocaine
Crack use is prevalent in the inner cities of San Diego County and East San Diego.¹⁷ In 2003, a gram of crack cocaine cost \$40-\$80 with purity levels ranging from 68% to 71%. Powder cocaine ranged from 54% to 90% pure.¹⁸
- Heroin
Heroin is considered a moderate, but increasing drug threat to San Diego.¹⁹ Black tar heroin continues to be the prevalent form of heroin used in San Diego County. In 2003, an ounce of black tar could be purchased in San Diego for \$600-\$1,200 with purity levels ranging from 14% to 70%. A gram of black tar heroin cost \$60 in 2003.²⁰
- Marijuana
Marijuana is the most available drug in San Diego. Most marijuana available in San Diego is produced in Mexico, although some is also locally grown.²¹ In 2002, baggies of marijuana (containing up to a gram) could be purchased in San Diego for \$5, while

1-3 grams could be purchased for \$10. Ounce prices ranged from \$60 to \$100. While a pound of Mexican marijuana cost \$300-\$500, a pound of sinsemilla cost \$3,000-\$5,000.²²

➤ **Methamphetamine**

Law enforcement report the availability of both rock and powder forms of meth in areas previously dominated by crack.²³ In 2003, meth sold for \$6,000-\$10,000/pound while the ice/glass form of the drug sold for \$9,000-\$11,000/pound. Purity at the gram and ounce levels ranged from 10% to 90%.²⁴

➤ **Club Drugs**

Club drug such as MDMA, GHB, Rohypnol, and ketamine are a moderate but increasing threat to the San Diego area. Club drug use among young adults and teens is also increasing.²⁵ MDMA is popular among San Diego youth and continues to be the number one drug trend. GHB is often used by youth because it is inexpensive and doesn't produce a hangover. A water bottle capful of GHB sells for \$5-\$10. PCP use is widespread among black teenagers in San Diego.²⁶

Juveniles

- A 2003 survey of San Diego high school students indicated that 42.5% had tried marijuana at least once in their lifetimes. This is up from 41.8% in 2001, but down from 43.1% in 1999, 49.6% in 1997, and 44.7% in 1995.²⁷

Percent of High School Students Using Drugs, San Diego, 1995-2003

	1995	1997	1999	2001	2003
Lifetime marijuana	44.7%	49.6%	43.1%	41.8%	42.5%
Current marijuana	26.5	26.4	22.2	22.5	22.4
Lifetime cocaine	9.8	9.9	8.4	8.8	7.7
Current cocaine	4.4	4.0	3.2	3.8	3.0
Lifetime inhalant	17.3	14.3	11.7	11.3	12.8
Current inhalant	n/a	n/a	4.1	3.3	3.7
Lifetime heroin	n/a	n/a	2.6	2.9	2.7
Lifetime methamphet.	n/a	n/a	9.2	8.4	7.6
Lifetime MDMA	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	9.0
Lifetime illegal steroid	3.3	3.7	3.4	5.2	4.4

Enforcement

- **Medicinal Marijuana/Cannabis Task Force²⁸**
The City of San Diego created a Medicinal Marijuana/Cannabis Task Force to advise the City Council on the most efficient way to regulate the use of medicinal marijuana in accordance with Proposition 215.
- As of October 2003, there were 2,823 full-time law enforcement employees in San Diego (2,062 officers and 761 civilians).²⁹

Trafficking and Seizures

- Mexican drug trafficking organizations (DTOs) are the primary suppliers and distributors of cocaine, heroin, methamphetamine, and marijuana.³⁰
- San Diego functions as a transportation hub for Mexican methamphetamine.³¹

- The CBAG area of responsibility has five of the busiest land Ports of Entry, international airports and seaports, urban, rural and designated wilderness areas, oceans, mountains and deserts.³²
- From 2001 to 2002, the amount of cocaine seized at the San Diego and Imperial County borders decreased 22%. During 2002, 2,875 kilograms of cocaine were seized at the two county borders.³³

Drugs Seized at San Diego/Imperial County Borders (in Kilograms), 1997-2002

Drug	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002
Cocaine	2,159	1,969	3,666	4,348	3,709	2,875
Heroin	60	82	100	62	207	50
Marijuana	126,794	172,436	180,239	217,658	209,675	119,173
Meth.	298	312	577	482	630	458

Courts

- Drug Courts³⁴
As of September 2004, there were 3 drug courts in San Diego that had been in existence for more than 2 years. There were no additional drug courts in existence or being planned in San Diego at that time.

Consequences of Use

- During 2002, there were 6,597 drug-related emergency department (ED) episodes in San Diego. Cocaine was mentioned 807 times in the ED episodes.³⁵

Number of ED Drug Mentions, Selected Drugs, San Diego, 1998-2002

Drug Type	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002
Alcohol-in-combination	1,878	1,801	1,622	1,660	1,704
Cocaine	971	1,063	1,002	812	807
Heroin	984	1,063	1,031	733	708
Marijuana	1,128	923	955	1,107	1,174
Amphetamines	753	916	894	942	1,143
Methamphetamine	721	584	747	673	598
MDMA (Ecstasy)	14	25	47	52	30
Ketamine	4	13	12	10	20
LSD	65	65	48	22	8
PCP	52	37	36	38	53
Miscell. hallucinogens	34	22	27	10	24
Rohypnol	8	5	8	5	5
GHB	34	77	65	57	56
Inhalants	14	12	6	3	4
Combinations NTA*	7	13	7	9	3
Total ED drug episodes	6,977	7,033	7,093	6,962	6,597
Total ED drug mentions	12,180	12,038	11,636	11,779	11,195

*NTA= Not tabulated above

- During 2002, there were 376 drug-related deaths reported to the Drug Abuse Warning Network (DAWN) by Medical Examiners (ME) in San Diego.³⁶

Number of Drug Deaths and Drug Mentions, San Diego, 1998-2002

Drug Type	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002
Alcohol-in-combination	103	118	119	100	104
Cocaine	83	74	84	40	36
Heroin/morphine	165	142	145	111	102
Marijuana	--	1	--	5	1
Amphetamines	66	73	74	84	50
Methamphetamine	84	88	112	94	81
Club drugs	2	5	3	9	6
Hallucinogens	1	1	--	--	2
Inhalants	--	--	--	2	1
Narcotic analgesics	145	137	179	164	123
Other analgesics	19	25	22	26	37
Benzodiazepines	46	59	58	81	94
Antidepressants	70	109	67	98	119
All other substances	82	110	124	91	183
Total drug deaths	336	356	360	312	376
Total drug mentions	866	942	987	905	939

- Through May 31, 2003, there were 11,787 adult/adolescent and pediatric AIDS cases reported in San Diego County. Injection drug use accounted for 9% of the adult/adolescent cases. The dual risk category of men having sex with men and injection drug use accounted for another 9% of cases.³⁷

Treatment

- Approximately 19% of San Diego adult male arrestees interviewed during 2003 reported that they have received outpatient treatment at some point in their lives.³⁸

Adult Arrestee Drug/Alcohol Treatment Status, San Diego, 2003

Type of Treatment	Male	Female
Outpatient		
Ever	18.5%	23.4%
Past year	4.3	6.7
Inpatient/residential		
Ever	29.5	28.8
Past year	7.6	5.4

- There were 7,027 methamphetamine admissions to county-funded treatment programs in San Diego County during 2002.³⁹

Admissions to County-Funded Treatment Programs, San Diego County, 1997-2002

Year	Methamph.	Marijuana	Heroin	Cocaine
1997	3,887	822	1,338	1,266
1998	4,418	1,561	1,323	1,198
1999	4,251	2,119	1,362	1,356
2000	4,507	2,447	1,452	1,300
2001	5,725	3,143	1,493	1,469
2002	7,027	3,547	1,636	1,426

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² Ibid.

³ San Diego Mayor's Web site: <http://genesis.sannet.gov/infospc/templates/mayor/index.jsp>

⁴ San Diego City Manager's Web site: <http://www.sandiego.gov/city-manager/>

⁵ San Diego City Council Web site: <http://www.sandiego.gov/city-council/>

⁶ San Diego Police Department Web site, Organization Chart:

<http://www.sandiego.gov/police/pdf/orgchart.pdf>

⁷ San Diego County Sheriff's Department Web site: <http://www.sdsheriff.net/home/>

⁸ Office of National Drug Control Policy, Southwest Border High Intensity Drug Trafficking Area:

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⁹ San Diego Police Department Web site, Landlord Training Program:

<http://www.sandiego.gov/police/prevention/landlord.shtml>

¹⁰ San Diego Police Department Web site, Clean Syringe Exchange Pilot Program:

<http://www.sandiego.gov/communityservices/cleansyringe/>

¹¹ San Diego Police Department, Historical Crime Data 1950-2003:

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¹⁴ Ibid.

¹⁵ California Department of Justice, *California Criminal Justice Profiles, 2003*:

http://justice.hdcdojnet.state.ca.us/cjsc_stats/prof03/index.htm

¹⁶ Ibid.

¹⁷ National Institute on Drug Abuse, *Epidemiologic Trends in Drug Abuse: Highlights and Executive Summary*, June 2002: http://www.drugabuse.gov/PDF/CEWG/Vol1_602.pdf

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- ²⁷ Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, *Youth Risk Behavior Surveillance: Youth Online – Comprehensive Results*: <http://apps.nccd.cdc.gov/yrbss/>
- ²⁸ San Diego Police Department Web site, Medical Marijuana/Cannabis Task Force: <http://www.sandiego.gov/communityservices/medicalmarijuana/>
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