

"New law targets key ingredient in methamphetamine"

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Illinois governor Rod R. Blagojevich signed a new law Wednesday to toughen the current anti-meth laws.

The new law makes any attempt to possess, procure, transport, store or deliver anhydrous ammonia, a key meth ingredient, a Class 4 felony. Class 4 felonies can carry a prison sentence of one to three years and/or a fine of up to \$25,000.

Anhydrous ammonia is a key ingredient in the production of meth and storing it can be extremely dangerous.

- "Anhydrous ammonia is useful as a fertilizer. Unfortunately it is also an ingredient for methamphetamine production and becomes extremely dangerous when it's not handled properly," Blagojevich said. - "We must do what we can to stop the spread of meth addiction and trafficking in our communities, and to protect the public from the dangers associated with obtaining the ingredients for meth."

- Anhydrous ammonia is traditionally stored in large tanks under pressure for use on farms. - Because it is difficult for meth cooks to access the substance easily, farmers' tanks of anhydrous ammonia are often targeted by meth 'cookers'. - When released, anhydrous ammonia can cause injuries to emergency responders, the public and meth cooks. When handled improperly, anhydrous ammonia can be explosive and deadly. - Meth cooks steal anhydrous ammonia in unauthorized containers such as beverage coolers and gas canisters.

- Current law classifies the attempted possession, procurement, transportation, or delivery of anhydrous ammonia in an unauthorized container as a Class A misdemeanor, which carries a prison term of up to 364 days, 2 years of probation and a maximum fine of \$2,500. -

The law goes into effect January 1, 2008.