

National Forensic Laboratory Information System (NFLIS)

Introduction

The [National Forensic Laboratory Information System \(NFLIS\)](#) is a core DEA data asset. The Drug Enforcement Administration’s (DEA) Diversion Control Division established NFLIS in 1997 to publish the aggregated results of drug chemistry analyses conducted by federal, state, and local/ municipal foreMFLInsic labs (now called NFLIS-Drug) of seized drugs during law enforcement operations. This information supports drug scheduling efforts, and informs drug policy and drug enforcement initiatives. Although the NFLIS program includes three components (NFLIS-Drug, NFLIS-TOX, and NFLIS-MEC), this release only contains NFLIS-Drug as the latter two are more recent.

Sources of Data

NFLIS-Drug is the most complete forensic dataset generated nationwide. It is made possible by relying on voluntary participation from 50 State systems and 108 local or municipal laboratories/laboratory systems with drug chemistry sections, representing a total of 283 individual laboratories as of February 2023.

- Participating labs provide regular datasets each month to the DEA. These datasets vary due to differing lab capabilities and differing state and local governance policies. The DEA unifies these datasets, which includes data cleaning and data alignment.
- Commonly reported data elements used to compile this data release include drug name, date the data was generated, laboratory type, and laboratory location.

Use of the Data

The NFLIS-Drug helps the drug control community achieve its mission by:

- Providing detailed information on the prevalence and types of controlled substances secured in law enforcement operations,
- Identifying variations in controlled and non-controlled substances at the national, state, and local levels,
- Identifying emerging drug problems and changes in drug availability in a timely fashion,
- Monitoring the diversion of legitimately marketed drugs into illicit channels,
- Providing information on the characteristics of drugs, including quantity, purity, and drug combinations, and
- Supplementing information from other drug sources, including the National Survey on Drug Use and Health (NSDUH) and the Monitoring the Future (MTF) study.

Data Scope and Summary

This dataset release contains NFLIS-Drug data summary with the following scope:

- Data between 2007 and 2021 (inclusive)
- Most commonly reported substances found in drug seizure samples
- Frequency of occurrence by substance, region, and year.

Each set of the following five data tables is downloadable in CSV format per year:

- Table 1. National Estimates for the Most Frequently Identified Drugs
- Table 2. State Counts for the Most Frequently Identified Drugs
- Table 3. State Counts for Fentanyl and Fentanyl-Related Compounds
- Table 4. State Counts for Synthetic Cannabinoid Substances
- Table 5. State Counts for Synthetic Cathinones

Data Limitations

- **Report Counts:** Participating forensic labs receive drug cases secured in law enforcement operations for analysis. Each case may consist of one or more drug items. Within each item, multiple drugs may be identified and reported. A single report equates to one documented occurrence of a drug. Each report is counted separately in the raw counts (Tables 2-5).
- **Updates:** The DEA reserves the right to update, without notice, NFLIS data for a variety of reasons, including: changes to LIMS reporting or Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) updates. The date of update will always be articulated.
- **Hold Harmless:** DEA assumes no responsibility for third-party analysis, conclusions, or policy decisions based on an interpretation of NFLIS-Drug data.
- **Additional Information:** More information on NFLIS-Drug data limitations can be found in [NFLIS Data Terms of Use](#), [NFLIS Statistical Methodology](#) and [NFLIS Q&A](#).

Data Release and Access Policy

This dataset release follows these guiding principles of making high quality data available:

- As widely as practicable
- Routinely updated/released
- In as much detail as possible
- While maintaining participating labs’ confidentiality.

When using NFLIS data, please cite it according to [Citation Guidance for NFLIS Publications](#). If a NFLIS journal or other publication requires you to get official permission for citations, please submit the permission form to NFLIS@usdoj.gov.