



IN FEW STOPS, ARIZONA BORDER AGENTS SEIZE ENOUGH LETHAL DRUGS TO KILL 28.5 MILLION - THE CENTER SQUARE

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Photo: Ammunition being smuggled into the U.S.

U.S. Customs and Border Protection agents continue to seize record amounts of fentanyl, methamphetamine, weapons and ammunition at the Mariposa Port of Entry in Nogales, Arizona.

Seizures in the month of May continued the trend of agents catching alleged smugglers attempting to bring drugs into the U.S. and weapons to Mexico. Cartel and gang operatives have a pattern of smuggling people and drugs into the U.S. and weapons, ammunition, cash and other contraband using stolen cars, to Mexico, law enforcement officials told The Center Square.

Last month, CBP agents seized more than three million fentanyl pills in one load, Mariposa Nogales Port Director Michael Humphries said. After inspecting a utility trailer, a canine team enabled the officers to find roughly 3,372,300 fentanyl pills hidden inside hollow steel beams that made up the floor of the trailer.

According to the U.S. Drug Enforcement Agency, seven out of 10 fentanyl pills it seizes contain a lethal dose of fentanyl.

In this one seizure, using DEA's metric, CBP agents seized enough fentanyl pills to kill at least 2.36 million people.

In another stop, CBP officers conducting outbound operations seized 13,460 rounds of assault rifle ammunition. After searching the vehicle, they found the ammunition hidden inside its panels and firewall and in one of the doors.

In another outbound stop, they seized 53,858 rounds of ammunition of various calibers, two handguns, nine M13 Thermobaric devices, and 18 magazines. The ammunition and "large amount of munitions was most likely going to supply and support cartel operations," Humphries said.

In another stop, Nogales POE CBP agents conducting commercial operations seized 323 pounds of methamphetamine hidden inside a shipment of charcoal. Some of the bags had packages disguised as charcoal logs that contained meth that were comingled with the charcoal. A K9 unit helped uncover the stash.

According to [AddictionResources.net](https://www.addictionresources.net), a lethal dose of methamphetamine is an estimated 200 milligrams. Based on the amount seized,

and using this benchmark, they seized enough meth to kill more than 2,267 people.

Leading up to Memorial Day weekend, in one week, Nogales POE CBP agents seized roughly 265,275 fentanyl pills in a spare tire in one stop on May 26. They seized 56 pounds of meth also hidden in a spare tire on May 28. They seized roughly 22,050 fentanyl pills that an alleged smuggler had strapped to his legs on May 29. They also seized roughly 49,950 fentanyl pills hidden inside a car battery.

Combined, they seized enough fentanyl and meth that could have killed more than 25.6 million people in just a handful of stops.

In another single stop, they seized roughly 700,000 fentanyl pills hidden in various food containers, packaging, cans and cartons in the trunk of a vehicle. The amount seized was enough to kill more than 490,000 people – more than the individual populations of every city in Arizona except for Phoenix, Tucson and Mesa.

“Officers continue to be very diligent in their search for dangerous opioids,” Humphries said.

The **amount** of fentanyl and meth they seized in these few stops was enough to kill nearly four times the population of Arizona, which is slightly more than 7 million.

The Nogales POE is part of the CBP Tucson Sector, one of the busiest in the country for agents combating illegal activity. It’s located roughly 65 miles from the U.S.-Mexico border and is the commercial access point into the U.S. from Nogales, Sonora, in Mexico.

The value of imports and exports going through the Mariposa Nogales POE in 2022 totaled \$28.6 billion, according to the Greater Nogales Santa Cruz County Port Authority.

In 2023, nearly 382,000 trucks, 3.7 million cars, 889 trains, nearly 3 million pedestrians, and overall, more than 10.3 million people crossed through the port of entry from Mexico into Arizona, according to port authority data.

In the last three fiscal years, CBP Tucson OFO agents have increasingly apprehended a record number of illegal border crossers. In fiscal 2024 through April, they apprehended 28,292 illegal border crossers, nearly as many as they did in all of fiscal 2023 of 29,086, according to CBP data. The majority apprehended were single adults.

By comparison, they apprehended 9,929 in fiscal 2022 and 6,659 in fiscal 2021, according to CBP data.