

## **Six sent to hospital in meth lab discovery**

Six people, including three members of the Knox County Sheriff's Office, were sent to the hospital Thursday after the discovery of a meth lab.

Russell C. Friend, 37, of Howard, was arrested on a charge of illegal possession of chemicals for the manufacture of drugs. He is in the Knox County Jail.

Two detectives and a deputy contacted Friend at his residence as part of a drug investigation, unaware a meth lab was in operation inside the house, the sheriff's office reported. Friend opened a door and a cloud of chemical vapors covered the three officers, the report said. Also exposed to the chemicals were Friend and his two small children.

The Eastern Knox County Joint Fire Department and EMS units responded. After decontamination at the scene, all six people were taken to Knox Community Hospital for evaluation. They were treated and released.

Knox County Children Services took custody of the children.

Knox County Sheriff David Barber said certified clandestine meth lab officers from Knox and Ashland counties, who are part of the METRICH Enforcement Unit, evaluated and removed the meth lab from the residence.

He said he expects further charges against Friend.

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