



## Meth and Its Makers – New Hazards in Housing

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### On-Scene Safety

- Drug lab sites are crime scenes. Lab sites should only be entered by persons accompanied by law enforcement personnel and after a warrant has been obtained.
- Law enforcement personnel may evacuate the neighborhood depending upon the size of the lab and the amount of toxic chemicals being emitted.
- Do not turn any electrical devices/lights on or off. The simple act of turning on an electrical switch may cause an explosion. In an explosive atmosphere even turning on a flashlight might cause an explosion.
- Do not shut off the water supply to the house or the chemical reaction.
- Do not enter contaminated areas prior to ventilation, shutdown of equipment, and removal of chemicals and equipment.
- Minimize exposure by limiting time on-site and by wearing protective clothing as needed.
- Evaluate exposure and take measures to contain or eliminate it, e.g., by washing exposed skin and removing contaminated shoes or clothing.
- Take steps to avoid transporting contamination on yourself to someone in your care.

### Development of a Cleanup Protocol

- Before beginning cleanup activities, a protocol should be developed to give workers step-by-step instructions on how to proceed. This protocol should address worker safety, adhering to Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) regulations and guidelines as well as the handling and disposal of potentially contaminated materials.
- All discarded materials should be disposed of in landfills that are authorized to receive such materials in accordance with applicable federal, state and local regulations.
- This protocol should be approved in writing by the responsible parties such as the property owners or their representatives and the cleanup contractor and a complete copy should be available to all supervisory personnel on the site.

- Obtaining copies of any reports, diagrams of the site, lists of chemicals and equipment confiscated from the site and any other documents generated by law enforcement personnel or the hazardous waste removal contractor can aid in the assessment process.
- Information obtained from these documents will help to identify:
  1. Areas where the processing or cooking occurred
  2. Areas where chemicals and equipment were stored. Contamination may result from spills, leaks vaporization from open containers
  3. Areas where chemicals and waste were disposed
  4. The chemicals found on the property and the quantities of each chemical
  5. The method(s) used to produce the methamphetamine

## Re-Occupancy of Structures

- After the primary cleanup process has been completed and law enforcement officials release the property, any subsequent cleanup becomes the responsibility of the property owner.
- In many cases, property owners will allow reoccupation of building without any consideration of potential contamination resulting from the illegal drug manufacturing activities that had occurred previously.
- All inspections and assessments should be documented in writing.
- The information contained in the documentation should include
  1. The dates that activities were performed
  2. Name of the person who performed the work
  3. The company responsible for the work
  4. The person writing the report and the date that the report was issued
  5. All sampling results should be certified by the laboratory that performed the analyses
  6. All reports should be in writing
  7. Any other documents such as drawing, handwritten notes and photographs should be signed, dated and included as part of the cleanup records.
  8. These records should be used to verify that the structures have been assessed and decontaminated and test results indicate that they are considered acceptable for reoccupation.

## Disclosure

- There are no long-term studies showing what effect high levels of residual meth has on adults or children but anecdotal evidence points to serious respiratory problems -- problems an unknowing homeowner might never connect to a former meth lab.

- Some states have a specific mention in their requirements that if there has ever been a meth lab on that property, it must be disclosed.

## **For State information on Meth Lab Disclosure**

<http://methlabhomes.com/category/state-laws/disclosure-laws/>

## **Additional References and Resources**

Washington State Department of Health, Office of Toxic Substances. "Guidelines for the Contamination Reduction and Sampling at Illegal Drug Manufacturing Sites." June 1996.

<http://www.doh.wa.gov/ehp/ts/CDL/CDLGuidelines.pdf>.

National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health, Department of Health and Human Services. "NIOSH Pocket Guide to Chemical Hazards." DHSS Publication No. 2001-145: August 2001. <http://www.cdc.gov/niosh/npg/npg.html>.

Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment, Water Quality Control Division. "The Basic Standards for Ground Water." 41.0 (5 CCR 1002-41). <http://www.cdphe.state.co.us/op/regs/waterregs/100241.pdf>

Bureau of Justice Assistance  
Discretionary Grants Program Division  
Law Enforcement Branch  
633 Indiana Avenue NW.  
Washington, DC 20531  
Tel: 1-202-616-3452

Bureau of Justice Assistance Clearinghouse  
P.O. Box 6000, Rockville, MD 20849-6000  
Tel: 1-800-688-4252 Fax: 1-301-251-5212  
Bulletin Board System: 1-301-738-8895  
Internet: [look@ncjrs.aspensys.com](mailto:look@ncjrs.aspensys.com)  
U.S. Department of Justice Response Center  
Tel: 1-800-421-6770 FS000117  
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*For information about the Landlord Training Program:*  
Campbell DeLong Resources, Inc.  
319 SW. Washington, Suite 802, Portland, OR 97204  
1-503-221-6679 (voice-mail response system)  
[LTP info@aol.com](mailto:LTP info@aol.com) (e-mail)

U.S. Department of Justice, Office of Justice Programs  
Bureau of Justice Assistance, Washington, D.C. 20531

Emergency Planning and Community Right-To-Know Act (EPCRA):

Emergency Planning [40 CFR Part 355] -Facilities that have 500 pounds or more of ammonia must report to their LEPC and SERC and comply with certain requirements for emergency planning.

Hazardous Chemical Reporting [40 CFR Part 370]:

Facilities that have ammonia at or above 500 pounds must submit an MSDS to their LEPC, SERC, and local fire Chemical Emergency Preparedness and Prevention Office Printed on recycled paper

Hazardous Substance Release Reporting [40 CFR 302]:

Facilities that release 100 pounds or more of ammonia (other than the normal application of a fertilizer) must immediately report the release to the National Response Center (NRC), (800) 424-8802.

OSHA, Process Safety Management (PSM) Standard [29 CFR 1910.119]

Hazard Communication [29 CFR 1920.120]:

Requires that the potential hazards of toxic and hazardous chemicals be evaluated and that employers transmit this information to their employees.

U.S. Department of Justice, Drug Enforcement Administration. "Methamphetamine."  
2002. [www.usdoj.gov](http://www.usdoj.gov). 4 pp.

Amman, H. 2000. "Review of Contaminant Levels: Guidelines for Clandestine Drug Lab Cleanup." Washington State Department of Health. 6 pp.

Koch Crime Institute. "Cleaning up Former Methamphetamine Labs." 12/2000.  
[http://www.kci.org/meth\\_info/meth\\_cleanup.html](http://www.kci.org/meth_info/meth_cleanup.html)

U.S. Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA) and Environmental Protection Agency (EPA). "Guidelines for the Cleanup of Clandestine Drug Laboratories." GPO, Washington DC: 1990.