

From: Scott Gallacher

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Subject: The management of methamphetamine testing and decontamination

Hi all,

Thanks those of you who've approached me about yesterday's release of a report by the Prime Minister's Chief Science Advisor (CSA), Sir Peter Gluckman, on the management of methamphetamine testing and decontamination.

You'll be aware the report makes a number of findings and recommendations about the health risks from methamphetamine use in houses. [You can read the report here](#) or [visit the MBIE website](#).

Some of you will have questions about how it relates to your contract with the Ministry of Social Development. We will continue to honour any existing contractual arrangements and if you have any questions about this please talk with or Aimee or Jonathon in the first instance (who I have copied in on this email). We'll do our best to answer your questions.

As always, thanks for the awesome work you're doing to help support people most in need this winter.

The report's key findings and recommendations

The report's main finding is that there is currently no evidence that methamphetamine levels typically resulting from third-hand exposure to smoking residues on household surfaces elicit an adverse health effect. It also makes these key findings and recommendations:

- Dwellings can become contaminated with methamphetamine residues if the drug is manufactured or smoked within it. Manufacture of methamphetamine in general results in greater methamphetamine residue levels than levels caused by smoking alone.
- There is currently no evidence that levels typically resulting from third-hand exposure to methamphetamine smoking residues on household surfaces can elicit an adverse health effect.
- Methamphetamine levels that exceed the NZS 8510: 2017 clean-up standard of 1.5 µg/100 cm² (micrograms per one hundred centimeters squared) should not be regarded as signaling a health risk.
- Exposure to methamphetamine levels below 15 µg/100 cm² would be unlikely to give rise to any adverse effects. This level still incorporates a 30-fold safety buffer on a conservative estimate of risk.
- It is important that guidance for mitigation measures are proportionate to the risk posed, and that remediation strategies should be informed by a risk-based approach.
- **Because the risk of methamphetamine residue at levels that might cause harm is extremely low, testing is not warranted in most cases. Testing is only recommended where meth lab activity is suspected or where very heavy use is suspected.**
- Combining multiple samples taken throughout a dwelling into a single composite sample, as permitted in NZS 8510: 2017, has limited value and cannot accurately reflect levels of risk, and in fact can lead to false impressions of high exposure.
- Remediation according to the NZS 8510: 2017 standard is appropriate only for identified former meth labs and properties where excessive methamphetamine use has been determined. This would only be as a precautionary measure to remove other toxicants that may be present, but not measured.

For further reference and information, you may want to note the following release from HNZ: [Housing New Zealand adopts new level for meth testing and decontamination](#)

I hope you find this useful, and if you have any further questions, please do not hesitate to contact either [Aimee](#), [Jonathon](#) or [myself](#).

All the very best,
Scott

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