

Methamphetamine Contamination – Interim Changes to Testing and Remediation

- Page published: 28 May 2015
- Page updated: 20 Jul 2017

Business Alert for TMs/AMs, Housing Advisors, Asset Mgrs, Maintenance Delivery and Contract Managers

A range of tests and methods can be used to identify suspected methamphetamine contamination in our properties and to remediate the property if contamination is confirmed. Some PBMC Contractors have raised concerns about the initial testing used by Housing New Zealand as well as one of the remediation methods.

Housing New Zealand is very mindful of its Health and Safety responsibilities to all its employees (staff and contractors). After discussions, and with immediate effect, we are making the following **interim** changes to our testing and remediation process.

- Housing New Zealand will no longer use the instant 'pregnancy' style positive/negative test when doing an 'initial swab' test where methamphetamine contamination is suspected. We will now only do the laboratory-tested swab testing which gives a numeric reading.
- While the Ministry of Health 'safe' threshold is 0.5ug (micrograms), all properties that test at 0.03ug or more will now receive a more comprehensive test/assessment.
- For properties with tests in a 0.03ug to 0.49ug range (i.e. below the 'safe' threshold), the Asset Manager will decide on the need for any precautionary remediation on a case-by-case basis in consultation with Tenancy Services staff.
- The foaming method of remediation will no longer be used by Housing New Zealand until we have clarification on whether the chemicals used in this method are considered safe under the Health and Safety in Employment Act. This means we have two options to decontaminate properties: either 1) the triple-wash method or 2) stripping out and reinstatement.
- Where the contamination level is 4.0ug or above, stripping out of materials will be mandatory.

These interim changes will remain in place until such time as we have evaluated these matters more fully. This will be part of a larger Project to begin shortly which will review all of our policies and processes relating to the way we manage methamphetamine issues in our properties.

This business alert has been authorised by Graeme Broderick.

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