

Policy for Managing Methamphetamine (Meth) in Housing New Zealand Managed Properties **P-250**

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1. Introduction

Methamphetamine (meth) is one of a family of drugs that act as stimulants to the central nervous system and speed up messages to and from the brain. In New Zealand it is often called 'P', short for 'pure', and is commonly available in crystal or powdered forms. Due to its potential to harm individual users, meth is a Class A controlled substance under the Misuse of Drugs Act 1975, and attracts the highest penalties for manufacture, trafficking, sale and use.

The use or manufacture of meth can result in contamination of the interior of a home, outbuildings, grounds, personal effects and furnishings. Housing New Zealand tenants, workers and other parties exposed to this contamination can potentially experience sensitivity to specific chemicals that may be present in the manufacture of meth.

Note: for the purposes of this policy document, the term 'workers' includes:

- Housing New Zealand employees
- contractors and subcontractors
- employees of contractors and subcontractors
- consultants
- worker volunteers
- trainees
- any persons carrying out work on behalf of Housing New Zealand.

2. Policy statement

We will manage and maintain our existing homes so tenants have access to warm, dry and safe homes, while we ensure the value and overall quality of our homes are maintained.

We will demonstrate best practice in managing our homes to create opportunities for us to be able to show leadership in the sector, helping to boost overall capability in the management of social housing in New Zealand.

We will take all reasonably practical steps to eliminate/minimise the risks associated with meth contamination. We will do this by:

- maintaining a focus on the wellbeing and safety of our workers, tenants and other persons, particularly any children in the household, potentially coming into contact with meth contamination
- making sure we take all reasonable steps to inform our tenants, workers and other persons of actions we are taking
- applying a risk based approach to manage any activities undertaken by workers and other persons potentially coming into contact with tenants and their associates involved in the manufacture, sale and/or use of meth.
- making sure we comply with and use the meth contamination levels contained in NZS 8510:2017 'Testing and decontamination of methamphetamine-contaminated properties' issued by Standards New Zealand on 29 June 2017. The results of testing for meth contamination will be interpreted against these levels to then guide actions taken in respect of staff, contractors, tenants and properties

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- complying with relevant legislation, standards, procedures and codes of practice
- having operating procedures to confirm, clean, reinstate or demolish contaminated properties in a safe manner
- using the appropriate legal channels to manage unlawful activity/anti-social behaviour (regardless of test results) where Housing New Zealand has credible evidence a tenant or associate is making, selling or using meth at a Housing New Zealand property
- maintaining an accurate record of all tests for meth contamination and the actions we have taken to investigate and resolve it.

3. Policy objective

Our objective is to safely identify and manage all cases where meth contamination is suspected or found in Housing New Zealand managed properties.

We will achieve this by following procedures designed to safeguard our workers, tenants and other persons who may occupy, maintain, visit or otherwise come into contact with properties we manage where:

- there is a risk from exposure to meth contamination
- there are safety and security issues connected to work in and around those properties.

4. Scope

This policy will apply to all properties managed by Housing New Zealand.

Our workers will have obligations to manage and control meth contamination in a way that is consistent with this policy and to comply with all applicable New Zealand health and safety legislation, regulations, standards and codes of practice.

Our tenants will have obligations to comply with Housing New Zealand's reasonable instructions and expectations regarding any illegal or hazardous substances, including meth, in Housing New Zealand managed properties.

5. Principles

5.1 Legislative compliance

We will comply with the current legislative and regulatory framework contained in the Health and Safety at Work Act 2015.

We will comply with all standards and contamination levels contained in NZS 8510:2017 'Testing and decontamination of methamphetamine-contaminated properties' issued by Standards New Zealand on 29 June 2017.

We will comply with the Residential Tenancies Act 1986 and all Local Authority regulations, by-laws and codes of practice.

We will make sure all contractors and any other third parties operate under the standards and legislation applicable to activities undertaken, when working at a Housing New Zealand managed property.

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5.2 Protection of workers and the community

We will take all reasonable steps to make sure our workers have a safe working environment and are not exposed to known situations of meth contamination.

We also commit, so far as is reasonably practicable, to making sure our workers, tenants, members of the community and the environment are not put at risk from work carried out at meth contaminated Housing New Zealand managed properties or any adjoining properties affected by meth contamination.

We will consult with workers, their representatives and the community as required in relation to the management of meth contamination in Housing New Zealand managed properties.

5.3 Risk management

We will adopt a risk based approach for the management and control of meth contamination in properties managed by Housing New Zealand. A test for meth contamination will be undertaken on:

- any tenanted or void property where Housing New Zealand has reasonable grounds, supported by credible evidence, for suspecting the property may have meth contamination
- any void property where Housing New Zealand staff have reasonable grounds (supported by credible evidence from a reliable third party) to believe the incoming tenant has drug history ([refer to section 5.8](#))
- any tenanted or void property where Housing New Zealand makes a business decision to carry out a non-suspicion test for meth contamination (ie where there is no apparent cause for suspicion).
- Risk assessment (people and property related) will be undertaken prior to testing a property. Risks will be reviewed as any further treatment progresses.

5.4 Testing and treatment of properties

All tested properties that demonstrate levels of meth above the meth contamination levels in NZS 8510:2017 will need to be decontaminated. Where the property is tenanted, for health and safety reasons, the property will need to be vacated so that decontamination work can occur.

Following decontamination, the property will be tested again to assess whether the work has successfully reduced meth contamination in previously affected areas to levels that are at or below the meth levels in NZS 8510:2017. Where this has occurred, a Clearance Report and Certificate will be provided by the contractor.

Where contamination is extensive and decontamination will not successfully reduce it to levels that are at or below the levels in NZS 8510:2017, demolition (in full or part) may be required.

All contaminated material will be removed as hazardous waste and disposed of in accordance with local authority regulations.

If the test for meth contamination shows results for other chemicals, Housing New Zealand will action any remedial work required in line with the relevant Housing New Zealand chemical process and the appropriate legislation, regulations, standards and codes of practice relating to that chemical.

5.5 Recording and monitoring all meth contamination cases

For the safety of our workers, tenants and contractors, we will:

- electronically highlight meth contamination action in Housing New Zealand's property records; and
- complete assessments/reviews of customer risk ratings for current tenants and associates in or linked to Housing New Zealand properties with a meth contamination status of either testing, confirmed or cleansed.

This information will be visible to our employees on core computer system screens and will be recorded in the Hazards section of Work Orders sent to our maintenance contractors.

We will electronically record all cases where Housing New Zealand carries out testing, decontamination and reinstatement work on properties suspected of or confirmed with meth contamination. This will enable us to monitor the number and status of all cases and provide statistical information, to demonstrate due diligence towards risk elimination/minimisation.

5.6 Termination and recovery of costs associated with meth contamination

Where we have credible evidence that a tenant or associate is making, selling or using meth at a Housing New Zealand managed property; and/or the tenant/associate has caused meth contamination (regardless of the test results), our employees will use the appropriate legal channels to manage this unlawful activity/anti-social behaviour.

Our actions may include:

- terminating the tenancy appropriately under the Residential Tenancies Act 1986
- seeking recovery of costs associated with testing, cleaning, reinstating, demolishing, or the loss of value of, a property from the tenants and/or other persons through the Tenancy Tribunal or District Court
- recording this information in Housing New Zealand's core computer systems for future reference and use.

5.7 Suspension of tenants and associates

Where a tenancy is terminated under section 5.6 above, we may also approve suspension of the tenants and/or associates from further Housing New Zealand housing in line with our suspension policy.

5.8 Housing people with drug history

We will intensively manage any tenancy being offered to and accepted by a person known or believed by Housing New Zealand to have a drug history, including:

- a social housing applicant, where credible evidence is supplied by a reliable third party (for example, Police or MSD) or the applicant themselves confirms drug use to staff
- a former Housing New Zealand tenant/household member or associate who has served a period of suspension from holding a tenancy with Housing New Zealand due to previous drug related activity

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- a Housing New Zealand tenant who receives a Business Initiated Transfer when meth contamination above NZS levels was confirmed at their current Housing New Zealand property.

In these situations, we will undertake a baseline meth test of their next Housing New Zealand property to establish that it is at or below the meth contamination levels in NZS 8510:2017.

Where applicable, we will then create a Household Action Plan with the incoming tenant that includes ongoing monitoring and further testing of the property for any change in levels of contamination from the baseline position. The frequency of further testing will be determined on a case by case basis.

6. Policy implementation

We will make sure all business units adopt this meth policy and related processes and guidelines when managing meth issues.

7. Definitions

The following terms are used in this document:

Above NZS levels – a property has test results showing areas with meth contamination above the meth levels in NZS 8510:2017– the property cannot continue to be occupied for health and safety reasons as decontamination will be required.

Baseline test – where a standard void property (with no suspicion or known contamination) is sampled, tested and assessed for meth contamination after all repair work is completed, to set a 'baseline' position before letting to a new tenant.

Below NZS levels – a property has test results showing areas with meth contamination at or below the meth levels in NZS 8510:2017 – property is fit for occupation.

Cleaning – all work required to reduce areas previously contaminated by meth to levels that are at or below the meth levels set by NZS 8510:2017 (cleaning options may include a triple wash, strip out, demolition or a combination of these).

Clearance Report and Certificate – a report and certification completed by a decontamination contractor, and including confirmation by an accredited sampler that a property has been decontaminated to the levels specified in NZS 8510:2017.

Decontamination – the process of reducing the level of meth in a property by cleaning the property or removing meth contaminated material from the property or both.

Demolition – destruction of a contaminated property (in whole or part) and the safe removal of all contaminated material from the site as hazardous waste and disposed of in accordance with local authority regulations.

Health and Safety at Work Act 2015 – legislation governing health and safety in New Zealand.

Household Action Plan – a plan put in place for a social housing applicant or Business Initiated Transfer in which both parties agree that due to a previous history relating to drugs/meth, Housing New Zealand will carry out ongoing monitoring/testing for meth in their tenancy compared to the baseline meth test result.

Letting – renting out a cleansed property to another tenant.

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Meth – an abbreviation of ‘methamphetamine’ (an amphetamine type stimulant that is highly addictive). Methamphetamine is a controlled substance, classified as a Class A (very high risk) drug under the Misuse of Drugs Act 1975.

Meth contamination – a property or property where the level of meth has been tested in accordance with NZS 8510:2017 and found to exceed 1.5µg/100cm².

NZS 8510:2017 – a document issued 29 June 2017 by Standards New Zealand to set standards and post-decontamination levels for the ‘Testing and decontamination of methamphetamine-contaminated properties’.

Reinstatement – all work required after decontamination to return the property Housing New Zealand’s letting pool.

Residential Tenancies Act 1986 – legislation (including updates) that governs all residential tenancies in New Zealand.

Strip out – where a property with meth contamination readings above the meth levels in NZS 8510:2017 requires the physical removal of contaminated materials from the dwelling and their disposal as contaminated waste.

Suspicion – where Housing New Zealand has reasonable grounds, supported by credible evidence, to suspect methamphetamine contamination in a Housing New Zealand tenancy or an adjoining property.

Test – the process of sampling, testing and assessing a property (tenanted or void) for the presence/extent/magnitude of meth contamination.

Triple wash – a method used to clean a property with meth contamination.

8. Records

Retain all records within Housing New Zealand's records system - refer 'Records retention and disposal' ([R-105](#)).

9. Version control

Details of previous versions are stored in Housing New Zealand's document management system (Objective). Refer to header and footer information for reference document elements or for any queries contact OurSpace@hnzc.co.nz.