

Marijuana Grow Operations

The Basics

Marijuana grow operations have become a major issue for property owners in BC, particularly in Vancouver and the rest of the lower mainland. Houses previously used for grow operations pose a serious health risk to inhabitants, leading municipalities to require environmental testing and related remediation work before allowing re-habitation in known grow operation properties. By far the most common health issue for these buildings is mould infestation. Other concerns include volatile organic compounds (VOC's), pesticide contamination, and potable water contamination.



These risks must be properly assessed, tested, remediated, and re-certified by qualified professionals. Below you will find information to guide you safely through the process of re-certifying your home for occupancy in compliance with your Municipalities' Bylaws:

Cleaning

- Some municipalities require property owners to hire only professional cleaners properly trained in handling contaminated homes. Cleaning your home must include walls, ceilings, counters, sinks, bathtubs, carpets and drapes (disposal may be required), furnaces, and related ductwork.
- Some Municipalities may require removal and disposal of carpets, drapes, and damaged drywall. Homeowners should first inquire with their Municipal Bylaw office for this clarification before hiring professional cleaners.
- Hiring professional cleaners will ensure your home has the highest probability of passing environmental testing. Have water or electric utilities been disconnected at the property? If so, you must inform your professional cleaners. Professional cleaning contractors can apply to the municipality to have all water services re-connected in order clean your home. However, your municipality may first require confirmation of pre-contaminate testing as well as "Enhanced Potable Water Testing". This means testing of your household water for pesticides, chemical, metals, and coliform.

Questions to ask your cleaners

- Is their work guaranteed?
- Do they use High Efficiency Particulate Air Filtered (HEPA) vacuum cleaners during cleaning? Your home will most likely fail environmental testing if a non-HEPA vacuum is used, leading to expensive re-cleaning and re-testing. HEPA vacuums have special filters that remove microscopic contaminants from the air. This is not the case for household or “ShopVac” type vacuums, which allow contaminants to escape back into your home through their exhaust.

Certification

Once the home has been professionally cleaned and verified by post inspection and laboratory analysis confirming cleanliness of the home, a detailed final report will be issued including photographs of all inspection and sampling activities and recommendation of re-occupancy in the final report to the Municipality.

Because ACM’s consultants are professionally accredited, the report is not only accepted by municipalities around the lower mainland for re-habitation, it is also accepted by most major banks and insurance companies. Our professional report is not only required for re-occupancy, it is required in order to obtain a mortgage or insurance on the property. This complete report is a necessity for any homeowner planning to sell their property in the future.

BEWARE OF THE FOLLOWING:

- Companies that provide and perform both cleaning and environmental consulting services are in conflict of interest and breaking their professional association’s “Ethics Code of Conduct”. A professional who is in violation of their Code of Ethics voids their company’s liability insurance and may lose their own accreditation as a Hygienist or OHS professional. If the violator loses their accreditation as a result of unethical behavior, this will also void your home’s occupancy recertification.
- Environmental firms who use unqualified personnel to test your home. Always ask the consultant for proof of their qualifications as an ISO14001 EMS Auditor, Hygienist, or OHS professional.