

Meth Labs

The Basics

Methamphetamine labs and other Illegal Drug Manufacturing Facilities (IDMF) create a multitude of health hazards in the homes they are based in. Even after the equipment and visible contamination is removed, chemical residues and biological hazards pose a serious health risk to you or anyone else occupying the home. These risks must be properly assessed, tested, remediated, and recertified by qualified professionals. Below you will find information to guide you safely through the process of recertifying your home for occupancy in compliance with your municipality's bylaws.



Before any Cleaning

"Pre-contaminate inspection, testing and sampling" must be completed before cleaning or repairs. The reason for this is that high levels of contaminants may pose a health risk to professional cleaning contractors. Cleaning agents may react violently with contaminants used in the manufacture of methamphetamines, causing fire or even explosions. Pre-contaminate testing allows your ACM specialist to determine cleaning agents that are most effective and safe for removing the contamination present in your home. Pre-contaminate testing may also include household water testing for pesticides, chemicals, metals and coliform.

Cleaning

- Municipalities require property owners to hire only professional cleaners properly trained in handling contaminated homes. Cleaning in your home must include walls, ceilings, counters, sinks, bathtubs, carpets, furnaces and related ductwork.
- Some municipalities may require removal and disposal of household contents, plumbing, sinks, tubs, flooring and all drywall. Homeowners should 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 stated above.

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 they exhaust. This is not the case for household or "ShopVac" type vacuums, which allow contaminants to escape back into your home through their exhaust.

Testing and Certification Requirements

- All lower mainland municipalities require an ISO14001 (Environmental), Hygiene, or Occupational Health and Safety (OHS) Professional to perform environmental testing of a home previously used for manufacturing illegal drugs before anyone can live in it. Usually within a two week period after successful completion of environmental testing, ACM will provide two copies of the report complete with photos and third party laboratory analysis recommending an occupancy permit be issued.
- Take one copy of the report to the municipality and apply to get all utilities restored and keep one copy for insurance or realtor if selling the home. Any banks or lending institutions considering mortgages on the home will also require this report during the sales process.
- Keep all receipts and reports to prove to the municipality that all work has been performed in compliance with municipal bylaws.
- "Post decontaminate inspection, testing and sampling" must be performed once the home has been professionally cleaned to verify the professional cleaning contractors cleanliness and removal of all contaminants in the home. Post inspection and laboratory analysis will confirm cleanliness of the home and all documentation will be included along with 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, your report is not only accepted by municipalities around the lower mainland for re-habitation, it is also recognized by most major banks and insurance companies. Without this professional report, you or a potential buyer would be unable to obtain a mortgage or insurance on the property. Our professional report is a necessity for any homeowner planning to sell, rent or re-occupy 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.