

Methamphetamine, also known as "speed" or "crank," is a potent central nervous system stimulant, illegally produced in makeshift labs. These labs are often set up at rental homes, apartments, motel rooms, garages, storage sheds, cars, campgrounds and various outbuildings.

Production of methamphetamine requires a variety of chemicals including explosives, solvents, metals, salts, and corrosives.



*Typical meth lab chemicals*

The drug manufacturing process also produces toxic by-products that can have various health effects on producers and others that are unintentionally exposed. Usually, law enforcement officials will remove the bulk of lab-related materials including chemicals and containers. However, small amounts of contaminants (**residues**) can still be present on floors, walls, counters, carpets, furniture, sinks, drains and ventilation systems. Serious health risks can result from exposure to even small amounts of some of these chemical residues. This can impact both current and future occupants of a former meth lab property.

***“What do I do if I suspect a house is being used as a meth lab?”***

Meth labs will often generate unusual odors that resemble ether, ammonia or auto parts cleaner. The windows may be covered or blacked out. You may find containers of chemicals such as lye or fuel line de-icer, or empty boxes of cold medicines such as Sudafed®. There may be sporadic foot and vehicle traffic in and out of the house at odd hours.

Since production of meth is a serious crime any suspicions should be immediately reported to the proper law enforcement agency. They will investigate and take appropriate action. **Never** investigate such a situation yourself. Aside from the toxic chemicals, the perpetrators may be armed and possibly even under the influence of meth themselves, which may make them irrational and dangerous.

***“I’m a renter and suspect that this apartment (or condo or house) was a former meth lab. How do I find out?”***

The easiest way is to contact your local police department for information. They can provide details regarding former criminal activity as well as any cleanup that may (or may not) have been done.

***“What cleanup activities are required for properties that were used as meth labs?”***

Effective March 30, 2005, owners of properties used as meth labs have two choices, they may demolish the structure, or they must clean it up following strict regulatory standards.

***“What Regulation applies to meth lab cleanups?”***

In Colorado, the regulation is 6 CCR 1014-3 – “Regulations Pertaining to the Cleanup of Methamphetamine Laboratories” adopted by the State Board of Health. Other local jurisdictions may have their own regulations, but in Jefferson County and its municipalities this is the only one that applies to cleaning up former meth labs



*Chemical staining on interior walls*

***“What will be required to be done during the cleanup?”***

The level of necessary cleanup will be based on the level of contamination present. Sampling will be necessary to determine where the problem exists. In most cases, contamination will have impacted the interior surfaces such as walls, floors and ceilings as well as ventilation systems and wastewater plumbing, including septic tanks.

All of these surfaces must be decontaminated or if that is not possible, removed for proper disposal. Obviously, these costs may become considerable.

***“Can I do this cleanup work myself?”***

Since this work will involve potential exposure to toxic fumes and chemicals left over from “cooking” the meth, cleaning up a former meth lab is a job for a professional company experienced in such work. A poor cleanup job is not worth the money you may save by doing it yourself. .



***“How do I find a professional company to do the cleanup work?”***

There are many reputable companies that specialize in meth lab cleanup. Contact your local health department or local law enforcement agency for information on reputable companies.

***“What is my liability as a landlord if I rent out an apartment (or condo or house) that was a meth lab?”***

Of course, issues relating to liability are often determined in a court of law if one party sues the other, and you are advised to consult an attorney. However, the State

Regulation does provide a shield from liability claims arising from a former meth lab provided that:

1. The owner of the property has the property cleaned up to specific standards contained in the regulation,
2. The cleanup is certified by a Certified Industrial Hygienist as meeting those standards, and
3. The cleanup report is filed with the local Health Department, Building Department and Law Enforcement Agency.

***“How do I file this cleanup report with the Health Department?”***

Send the report via certified mail to the address on this brochure. Environmental Health Services will notify you of any problems with the required certification. Once this has been done, the report is now a public record and available for inspection.

Contact us for further information on the procedures for cleaning up methamphetamine labs.

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## **Methamphetamine Labs**



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