

## NZS8510 Meth Testing and Decontamination Standard: The Danger of Ignoring It

Over the weekend, Stuff published a story about a tenant of a Christchurch property who was informed by the previous occupant that there was [a problem with meth contamination](#).

If the processes described in the Meth Testing and Decontamination Standard NZS8510 had been followed, this family would never have been put in the position they are now having to deal with. Additionally, the property owner would not be in a position where they are in the news. It is likely, their efforts to remedy the contamination issues have made the meth status of their property more uncertain. As a result of these actions, they're likely to be facing significant additional expense in dealing with it.

Why were processes not followed? Sadly, this is something we see often in our line of business. Too many people now lack respect for the NZS8510 standard, which has been undermined right from the beginning by people who have a different agenda and lack understanding of the challenges presented by meth residues.

There is a common thread of thought that meth levels have been designed by testing and decontamination companies who want to roort property owners and that a simple clean with Sugar Soap will remedy any meth-affected house. For responsible operators like MethSolutions, nothing could be further from the truth.

It appears this Christchurch property, and countless others like it, are examples of what can happen when propaganda is taken at face value. It's dangerous to future tenants AND landlords.

These efforts have been led by Ross Bell of the NZ Drug Foundation. Bell has labelled the meth testing and decontamination industry a 'scam'. Naturally, this line of thinking appeals to the economic interest of property owners (private landlords or HNZ) who are inconvenienced by meth residues and can find themselves footing some sizeable bills.

It should be pointed out that Bell's focus is on **minimisation of harm to the people who choose to use drugs** like methamphetamine. His focus is not on the people who own the property assets or those who later live in meth-affected houses, like the tenant featured in Stuff.

Bell is involved with groups who have the [ultimate goal of getting all drugs, including meth, decriminalised](#). Meth residues causing problems for independent property owners puts pressure on Bell's constituency not to use and makes achievement of this goal less likely.

Bell's righteously indignant 'scam' claims are 'validated' by the 'science' of Dr. Nick Kim. Dr Kim's opinion is not held by all scientists. While Dr. Kim may be happy with meth levels of  $12.5\mu\text{g}/100\text{cm}^2$ , most scientists around the world focus on a level of  $1 - 1.5\mu\text{g}/100\text{cm}^2$ . Some remain convinced that the level should be lower. Australia has a limit of  $0.5\mu\text{g}/100\text{cm}^2$  for both use and manufacture of meth. At  $1.5\mu\text{g}/100\text{cm}^2$  the level that is part of the Standard, has clear precedent and is well support by science, if not public sentiment.

From MethSolutions' perspective, acceptable levels of meth residues should be as high as they can be without compromising health and wellbeing. Understanding the levels at which this can confidently be achieved should be based on research, not wishful thinking.

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The levels in the NZ Standard were developed by independent scientists with no vested interest in the outcome. They were made workable by a committee made up of a wide range of parties. The Deputy Chair of the NZ Drug Foundation, Matthew Clark, was a late addition to this group.

The Committee was not paid to be there. It used science commissioned by the Ministry of Health and built on widely established best practice to develop a framework for dealing with methamphetamine residues in property. The aim of the standard was to increase certainty for all involved when it comes to the meth status of a property. The Standard is what people need to hear and work to, even if they don't particularly want to.

The mess in this Christchurch property is an example of what happens when the standard is ignored. In our experience, this is happening far too often – people discrediting the standard and thinking a simple Sugar Soap clean followed by a coat of paint will fix everything, regardless of the levels tested.

Please contact me for another side to the story put out by Ross Bell and his team, or for any clarification on these points.

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### **About MethSolutions**

MethSolutions is solely focused on testing property.

We do not undertake decontamination work.

Our purpose is to reduce the harm meth affected property can cause people.

Our principal focus is on health safety and wellbeing of occupants, using levels in NZS 8510 as a point of reference.

Once this is addressed, we then work to help minimise the economic impact of contamination that has arisen because a person has chosen to become involved with the use and/or manufacture of methamphetamine.

Our main aim, is to help people who own property assets avoid getting caught up with people who choose to use and/or manufacture meth