
Methamphetamine Disclosure Guidance

Issued by the Registrar of the Real Estate Authority under the Real Estate Agents Act 2008 on 7 September 2026 and applicable on and from this date.



Methamphetamine Disclosure Guidance

Introduction

1. Methamphetamine, also known as meth or P, is a powerful and addictive Class A illegal drug. If methamphetamine is used or manufactured at a property, it can produce residues that contaminate the property and may make it unfit for human habitation. Manufacturing usually produces the highest levels of methamphetamine contamination, but it is also possible for elevated levels to occur where methamphetamine has only been used (usually through smoking).
2. All licensed real estate professionals have obligations to customers and clients under the Real Estate Agents Act (Professional Conduct and Client Care) Rules 2012 (the [Code of Conduct](#)). Disclosing defects and information which should, in fairness, be provided to a party are cornerstone conduct obligations. Non-disclosure is a common theme in complaints and has the potential to cause harm to consumers of real estate agency services and undermine a fair real estate transaction.
3. Methamphetamine contamination in properties is likely to be relevant to many prospective purchasers, because of the potential health impacts, and for purchasers who may wish to have tenants in the property in the future. It is therefore important that licensees consider their disclosure obligations about known or suspected methamphetamine contamination.
4. This document provides guidance on:
 - the relevant [Code of Conduct](#) rules in the context of methamphetamine contamination
 - factors which licensees may consider when discussing possible methamphetamine contamination with their vendor
 - appropriate testing and decontamination methods
 - other considerations when dealing with methamphetamine contaminated properties.
5. This document is issued by the Registrar of the Real Estate Authority as guidance for licensed real estate professionals in accordance with the purposes of the Real Estate Agents Act 2008 (REA Act). It has been prepared following a review by REA¹ and feedback from representatives of the real estate sector and others. It replaces previous guidance issued by REA in 2018. This guidance follows the Residential Tenancies (Managing Methamphetamine Contamination) Regulations 2026 (**Tenancy Regulations**) which impose legislative obligations on landlords and set out the maximum acceptable levels of methamphetamine residue in rental properties. The Tenancy Regulations also include legislated testing and decontamination requirements for rental properties.
6. In contrast to the Tenancy Regulations, this guidance is not legally binding. It is provided to assist licensees to understand and comply with their obligations under the [Code of Conduct](#), although determinations of unsatisfactory conduct are for Complaints

¹ See 2026 review discussion document in the Appendix.

Assessment Committees to make under the REA Act (and for the Tribunal to consider on appeal). It is not legal advice and licensees are encouraged to seek independent legal advice and/or guidance from their supervisor with respect to their obligations.

Key relevant Code of Conduct rules

7. Rule 6.4 of the Code of Conduct provides that a licensee must not mislead a customer or client, nor provide false information, nor withhold information that should by law or in fairness be provided to a customer or client.
8. Rule 10.7 provides that a licensee is not required to discover hidden or underlying defects in land but must disclose known defects to a customer. Where it would appear likely to a reasonably competent licensee that land may be subject to hidden or underlying defects, a licensee must either—
 - (a) obtain confirmation from the client, supported by evidence or expert advice, that the land in question is not subject to defect; or
 - (b) ensure that a customer is informed of any significant potential risk so that the customer can seek expert advice if the customer so chooses.
9. Rule 10.8 provides that a licensee must not continue to act for a client who directs that information of the type referred to in rule 10.7 be withheld.

REA position

10. Methamphetamine contamination above 15 micrograms (μg) per 100 cm^2 is considered by REA to be a defect that must be disclosed.
11. REA recommends that the report produced following testing undertaken to determine the contamination level is disclosed, to assist consumers to understand the level of contamination and whether the testing and reporting is robust and consistent with NZS 8510 and/or the Tenancy Regulations.

How to identify potential methamphetamine contamination

12. Licensees are expected to know the property they are selling and identify known defects, and issues or defects with a property that would appear likely to a reasonably competent licensee. Methamphetamine contamination has the potential to be a defect or be information which should, in fairness, be disclosed to a customer.
13. Red flags that may alert a licensee to an issue or defect will depend on the particular circumstances. To assist with identifying possible methamphetamine contamination, licensees should consider the following list of non-exhaustive questions, which may prompt further enquiry:
 - Are there any unusual smells in the property, or in a particular area of the property?
 - Are there fumes or vapour escaping from windows or ventilators?
 - Are there sealed or covered windows?
 - Are there any yellow or brown stains, or signs of chemical damage, on the ceiling, floor, walls, or other flat surfaces (such as appliances or kitchen benches)?

- Are there any chemical containers or stained cookware or equipment anywhere on the property?
 - If the property is tenanted, is there information available to the licensee that could be a red flag, such as the tenant refusing to allow access for inspections over a lengthy period?²
 - Have neighbours or other licensees told you anything about the possibility of methamphetamine use or manufacture at the property?³ If there are less reliable indicators, such as rumours in the community, consider if any steps can be taken to verify the rumours, or whether testing is required to remove any doubt.
 - Is there any other information, such as the premises being used for purposes other than normal, that could suggest methamphetamine use or manufacture has occurred at the property?
14. The Land Information Memorandum (LIM) may also provide information about methamphetamine contamination if the local council has been notified (usually by the Police) that the property has been used as a site for using or manufacturing methamphetamine. However, if the council hasn't been notified, they won't hold this information.

What to do if you identify possible methamphetamine contamination

15. If you identify that there may be methamphetamine contamination in the property, then you should discuss this with your vendor and consider what ought to be disclosed to customers. There are two options available under rule 10.7 for disclosure: obtain confirmation from the client, supported by evidence or expert advice, to clarify the position and disclose this information; or inform customers of the potential contamination so they can seek expert advice. In the case of methamphetamine contamination, testing is recommended so that the level of contamination (if any) is known.
16. This may cause difficulty where the vendor disputes there is a risk of contamination, directs that no further investigations are carried out, or does not wish to disclose. We recommend reviewing the [Principles of Disclosure](#) guidance on the REA website and rule 10.8, checking your agency's disclosure policy, or seeking legal advice.

Licensees' disclosure obligations

17. To meet obligations under the Code of Conduct, REA recommends:
- a. Where any part of the property has methamphetamine residue levels above 15 micrograms (μg) per 100 cm^2 , that is considered to be a property defect which, if known by the licensee, must be disclosed to potential buyers (rule 10.7).
 - b. Disclosure is not required where the property tests at $15\mu\text{g}$ per 100 cm^2 or below or has been decontaminated back to $15\mu\text{g}$ per 100 cm^2 or below.

² See further *Re C45521* CAC2107, 4 November 2024

³ Ibid.

- c. If a prospective purchaser has clearly shown an interest in methamphetamine contamination, or asks you a specific question about methamphetamine contamination (rule 6.4) disclosure is required at any level of contamination⁴
- d. If there are red flags that may indicate the manufacture or use of methamphetamine at the property, then the licensee ought to undertake an enquiry with the vendor and consider their disclosure obligations.

Testing

- 18. If methamphetamine contamination is suspected, then in the first instance, the vendor may wish to carry out a screening assessment, which detects the presence of methamphetamine residue and indicates whether more detailed testing is needed. REA recommends that any screening assessments are carried out in accordance with the requirements of a valid screening assessment as described in the Tenancy Regulations.
- 19. If the results of a screening assessment show the presence of methamphetamine and indicate that detailed testing is required, then the detailed testing should be carried out in accordance with the requirements of a detailed assessment as described in the Tenancy Regulations. Detailed testing must be carried out by a qualified professional (as set out in paragraphs 7.2 and 7.3 of NZS 8510:2017), with a directory of accredited professionals available on the [IANZ website](#).
- 20. Field composite tests and unvalidated testing kits are not acceptable methods of testing under the Tenancy Regulations, and these types of testing are not recommended because of the risk of false positives or false negatives and failing to provide sufficient information for reliable decision-making.
- 21. As outlined in The Tenancy Services [guidance](#), the results of the testing will guide next steps, which may include disclosure, decontamination, or no further action.

Decontamination

- 22. The vendor may wish to decontaminate their property following testing. REA recommends decontamination is carried out to 15µg per 100 cm² or below and that decontamination follows the process set out in the Tenancy Regulations. Guidance on decontamination is available on the Tenancy Services [website](#).
- 23. As set out in paragraph 15 above, disclosure is not required where the property has been decontaminated back to 15µg per 100 cm² or below, unless the prospective purchaser has clearly shown an interest in methamphetamine contamination, or asks a specific question about methamphetamine contamination, in which case disclosure is required.

Other considerations

- 24. There may also be other matters to consider when listing a property where there is, or may be, methamphetamine contamination. For example, agency owners and licensees employed or contracted to an agency must understand their rights and obligations under the Health and Safety at Work Act 2015. They should be aware of the health and safety implications when visiting properties, including considering hazards and taking appropriate steps to eliminate or minimise risks.

⁴ *Buchanan v The Real Estate Agents Authority* [2020] NZREADT 57, at [25].

25. REA recommends that licensees who are unsure about their obligations or the safety of themselves or others seek support from their agency or seek legal or professional advice. There is no expectation that licensees would investigate active criminal activity, but they may wish to consider referring immediate safety concerns or suspected criminal activity to the local Council and the Police.

Other relevant guidance

- [Settled.govt.nz](https://settled.govt.nz)
- [Tenancy Services](#)

Appendix

REA 2026 review of REA methamphetamine disclosure guidance

Overview

Introduction

1. REA has developed and oversees compliance with the Real Estate Agents Act (Professional Conduct and Client Care) Rules 2012. The Registrar (under delegation from the Authority) is issuing this guidance to support licensees to comply with those Rules, thereby raising industry standards, promoting and protecting the interests of consumers in real estate transactions, and promoting public confidence in the performance of real estate agency work.
2. REA considers that guidance on licensee obligations relating to methamphetamine disclosure is important because contamination can affect the health of people who live in a property where methamphetamine has been manufactured or smoked in large quantities.⁵ Methamphetamine is one of the most commonly abused drugs in New Zealand. Methamphetamine consumption in 2025 continued at the markedly elevated levels first observed in 2024 and prices continue to be lower than previous years.⁶ Methamphetamine use remained elevated and stable during Quarter One (January to March) of 2026.⁷ The adverse effects of residing in a contaminated property have been reported to be mainly local effects on the skin, eyes, respiratory tract, or systemic neurological effects (i.e., effects mediated by the central nervous system).⁸ All effects appear reversible.
3. REA first produced its methamphetamine disclosure guidance in 2018, following the publication of the report of the Prime Minister's Chief Science Advisor, Sir Peter Gluckman⁹, entitled [*Methamphetamine Contamination in residential properties: exposures, risk levels, and interpretation of standards*](#) (**Gluckman Report**). That report was in response to public concerns that the presence of very low levels of methamphetamine residue posed a health risk and required remediation. The Gluckman Report identified potential health risks arising from third-hand exposure to methamphetamine in certain circumstances, and sought to establish an evidence and health-risk based approach for managing potential exposure and contamination that was proportionate to the risk posed. REA's 2018 methamphetamine disclosure guidance is closely based on the approach set out in the Gluckman Report.
4. REA's 2018 guidance also came after the introduction in 2017 of [*NZS 8510:2017 Testing and decontamination of methamphetamine-contaminated properties*](#) (NZS 8510: 2017). Prior to NZS 8510: 2017 being developed, there were no guidelines covering screening,

⁵ Environmental Science and Research [*Methamphetamine Contamination in Residential Environments: Analysis of evidence related to human health effects*](#), December 2020, page 1,

⁶ New Zealand Police [*National Drugs in Wastewater Testing Programme - 2025 Annual Overview*](#) March 2026

⁷ New Zealand Police [*National Drugs in Wastewater Programme Overview - Quarter One: January-March 2026*](#), June 2026

⁸ Above n2, page 32.

⁹ [*Methamphetamine Contamination in residential properties: exposures, risk levels, and interpretation of standards*](#)

sampling, testing and decontamination of properties contaminated by methamphetamine manufacture or use.

2026 Regulations for managing methamphetamine in rental properties

5. The [Residential Tenancies \(Managing Methamphetamine Contamination\) Regulations 2026 \(Tenancy Regulations\)](#) came into force on 16 April 2026. The Tenancy Regulations were introduced to provide clarity on how to manage methamphetamine contamination in rental housing in a proportionate way.
6. The Tenancy Regulations were promulgated following consideration of available health and science information and public consultation.¹⁰
7. The Tenancy Regulations:
 - a. set maximum acceptable levels of methamphetamine residue in rental properties, above which a property must be decontaminated (above 15µg/100cm²)
 - b. set a maximum inhabitable level above which a tenancy may be terminated (contamination over 30µg/100cm²)
 - c. identify acceptable processes for testing and decontamination.

REA Review

8. REA considered that it was appropriate to review its 2018 guidance in light of the new Tenancy Regulations. In undertaking its review, REA has:
 - a. reviewed and considered relevant documents, including:
 - i. the former Ministry of Housing and Urban Development's (HUD) materials relating to the regulation of methamphetamine contamination in rental housing and related consultation¹¹
 - ii. the summary of submissions made in response to the HUD consultation on proposals for methamphetamine regulations under the Residential Tenancies Act 1986¹², which references submissions provided by entities that provide decontamination services
 - iii. correspondence REA has previously received in relation to the 2018 guidance on disclosure of methamphetamine contamination
 - iv. the summary of submissions in response to the HUD consultation on regulating methamphetamine contamination in rental housing
 - v. *Methamphetamine contamination in residential properties: Exposures, risk levels, and interpretation of standards*, Report of Professor Sir Peter Gluckman, ONZ KNZM FRSNZ FMedSci FRS, Chief Science Advisor, 29 May 2018

¹⁰ Ministry of Housing and Urban Development [Regulation of methamphetamine contamination in rental housing Regulatory Options Discussion Paper](#) November 2022, and [Regulation of methamphetamine contamination in rental housing: Regulatory options Summary of Submissions](#)

¹¹ See above.

¹² See above.

- vi. New Zealand Standard 8510: 2017 *Testing and decontamination of methamphetamine-contaminated properties*
 - vii. the Tenancy Regulations and the accompanying [Tenancy Services Guidance](#)
 - viii. REA's 2018 methamphetamine disclosure guidance
 - ix. Complaints Assessment Committee decisions and decisions of the Real Estate Agents Disciplinary Tribunal relating to methamphetamine¹³
- b. met with representatives from the Ministry of Business, Innovation and Employment (MBIE) who were leading the work on the Tenancy Services guidance
 - c. met and discussed our proposed approach with PHF Science, and discussed its views on the health risks associated with contamination and sought their peer review of the draft guidance and this document
 - d. sought feedback from licensee representatives, HUD and MBIE on the preparation of the guidance.
9. In completing this review, REA is aware that there are opposing views as to the level above which decontamination should be undertaken (with those views expressed by submitters and considered in the HUD consultation).¹⁴ In preparing this advice we have considered those views, and also the scientific advice we received on health risks.

Revised guidance for real estate licensees

10. Having considered the above materials and views, REA considers it is appropriate to revise REA's guidance to real estate licensees on their obligations regarding disclosure of potential and actual methamphetamine contamination. The update aligns the guidance with the Tenancy Regulations. This approach takes into account the health risks considered by ESR (now PHF). The alignment recognises that the two regulatory systems deal with property and exist to address risks of harm to people engaged in real estate transactions and tenancies. It is noted that properties that are bought and sold may be rented out by the owner/owner's agent and will need to meet the standards for tenanted properties. Further, real estate agencies may be involved in both the sale or purchase of a property and subsequent property management of the property. Landlords may become vendors and prospective purchasers may be or become landlords. Consistency and certainty is desirable across the wider property sector.
11. REA acknowledges that some people or organisations may consider that it is not appropriate for REA to adopt the levels in the Tenancy Regulations. We have considered this view and consider that the adoption of the levels in the Tenancy Regulations is appropriate, for the reasons set out below.

¹³ *Buchanan v The Real Estate Agents Authority* [2020] NZREADT 57; *Re C45521* CAC2107, 4 November 2024; *Re C59910* CAC2405, 20 February 2026

¹⁴ In summary these views are that decontamination should be to 1.5µg/100cm² as set out by NZS 8510:2017; that recent reports by ESR (as it then was) do not provide evidence or justification for decontamination to the 15 µg/100cm² level; and that it is inappropriate for laypersons to carry out screening assessments and decontamination (in compliance with the NZS 8510:2017, as modified by the Tenancy Regulations).

12. The reasons for REA's approach to disclosure levels, testing, and decontamination are set out below. Further, REA notes that our document contains guidance only, unlike the Tenancy Regulations which are secondary legislation. Guidance is provided to real estate licensees consistent with REA's role and functions under the Real Estate Agents Act 2008.
13. It is noted that a review of NZS 8510: 2017 has commenced. If the outcome of that review results in a position which is substantially different from REA's revised guidance, we may undertake a further review of our guidance.
14. We recognise the ongoing concerns and impact that methamphetamine has on the New Zealand community, and this guidance is intended to support the real estate sector to meet their conduct obligations and help protect real estate consumers from harm.
15. Changes to REA's 2018 guidance are outlined below.

Scope extended – what to look for and more information on disclosure principles

16. The 2018 REA guidance focused on the level of methamphetamine contamination which amounts to a defect requiring disclosure, but did not set out how a reasonably competent licensee might identify possible methamphetamine contamination. It also noted that there was little need to test for methamphetamine contamination unless there was a strong suspicion or information from Police or forensic experts that a property had been the site of manufacture or heavy use of methamphetamine.
17. The revisions to the guidance include new sections on, "How to identify potential methamphetamine contamination" and "What to do if you identify possible methamphetamine contamination". These sections are designed to help licensees identify and respond appropriately to possible methamphetamine contamination, given it may not always be obvious, and may not come up frequently for licensees (as opposed to some other matters which are more obvious or well-understood).
18. The revised 2026 guidance contains some more specific indicators that can suggest further inquiry is warranted, including some indicators based on the facts of the recent case of *McDonald*, where the licensee had engaged in unsatisfactory conduct by failing to identify hidden defects in relation to methamphetamine contamination.¹⁵

Change to disclosure levels post-manufacture

19. REA's 2018 guidance sets out that disclosure is not required where methamphetamine has only been used at the property and it has been decontaminated to below 15µg/100cm². If methamphetamine has been manufactured at the property, the 2018 guidance requires decontamination to below 1.5 µg/100cm². This reflects the position in the Gluckman Report, which noted that remediation to the 1.5 µg/100cm² standard "may be prudent if there is also reason to suspect previous methamphetamine lab activities."¹⁶
20. REA is proposing that the revised 2026 guidance contains a single threshold (of levels above 15µg/100cm²) requiring disclosure (unless particular interest is shown), regardless

¹⁵ *KQ v McDonald* [2026] NZREADT 20 (30 April 2026)

¹⁶ Professor Sir Peter Gluckman, ONZ KNZM FRSNZ FMedSci FRS, Chief Science Advisor, *Methamphetamine contamination in residential properties: Exposures, risk levels, and interpretation of standards*, 29 May 2018, page 7.

of how the contamination was caused. REA considers that a threshold of $15\mu\text{g}/100\text{cm}^2$ or below is appropriate, regardless of whether use or manufacture has occurred at a property, because:

- a. In 2022, ESR (as it then was) advised HUD that $15\mu\text{g}/100\text{cm}^2$ is an appropriate target level to achieve for remediation¹⁷. They noted that further remediation of a property to a methamphetamine surface concentration of less than $15\mu\text{g}/100\text{cm}^2$ is highly unlikely to result in additional health benefits for residents¹⁸ but would result in further cost and inconvenience. In March 2026, The New Zealand Institute for Public Health and Forensic Science (**PHF Science** (formerly ESR)) confirmed that there have been no updates to the science on which the 2022 position was based.
 - b. Although NZS 8510: 2017 (**Standard**) remains in force and defines a property as 'contaminated' at levels exceeding $1.5\mu\text{g}/100\text{cm}^2$ (in high use areas), the Standard is now under review. We note that the ESR (now PHF Science) scientific position on which NZS 8510: 2017 was based has continued to develop since the Standard was published (for example, see the ESR report for HUD referred to in paragraph 20a above).
21. Since the coming into force of the Tenancy Regulations in April 2026, there is now a legislated acceptable level of methamphetamine contamination requiring action in the property sector. In the tenancy context, this is the maximum acceptable level of $15\mu\text{g}/100\text{cm}^2$, above which decontamination is required (there is also a maximum inhabitable level of $30\mu\text{g}/100\text{cm}^2$, above which a tenancy can be terminated). As outlined in paragraph 10 above, REA considers it is desirable to align the level of contamination requiring disclosure with the maximum acceptable level requiring decontamination under the Tenancy Regulations, which is $15\mu\text{g}/100\text{cm}^2$. This alignment would mean that the $15\mu\text{g}/100\text{cm}^2$ level above which decontamination action is required under the Tenancy Regulations, and at which disclosure is required under REA's disclosure guidance, is consistent across the wider property sector.
22. REA acknowledges that in considering compensation for a licensee's failure to recognise red flags that would have alerted them that there may be possible methamphetamine contamination requiring investigation and possibly disclosure, and to inform prospective purchasers of that significant potential risk, the Real Estate Agents Disciplinary Tribunal has recently held that a reasonable purchaser would want to reduce methamphetamine levels below the official New Zealand standard at the time ($1.5\mu\text{g}/100\text{cm}^2$ in high use areas and $3.8\mu\text{g}/100\text{cm}^2$ in low use areas), but noted that another "reputable report" recommends the $15\mu\text{g}/100\text{cm}^2$ threshold¹⁹. REA notes that these comments:
- a. were made in relation to a sale that took place in July 2021, before the ESR advice that remediation of a property to less than $15\mu\text{g}/100\text{cm}^2$ is highly unlikely to result in additional health benefits, before the review of the Standard was commissioned, and before the Tenancy Regulations came into force.

¹⁷ Environmental Science and Research [Methamphetamine Contamination in Residential Environments: Limits for Contamination](#) July 2022, page 1.

¹⁸ Above, page 13.

¹⁹ Above n6, at [48] and [52].

- b. did not take account of the Tribunal's earlier position, that "the guidelines which the Authority issued provide a logical and balanced approach to the matter by providing that levels of methamphetamine concentration which are below those identified in the Gluckman Report as hazardous need only be disclosed where there is a specific question addressed to the licensee."²⁰ The level referred to is 15µg/100cm².

Changes regarding testing and decontamination

23. REA's 2018 guidance notes that the methamphetamine testing industry is not regulated in New Zealand and that composite field testing is not recommended.
24. Although the methamphetamine testing industry remains unregulated at this stage, the Tenancy Regulations introduce the concepts of a valid screening assessment (see regulation 8) and the method of testing for methamphetamine in premises (see regulation 9). Now that legislated testing and decontamination mechanisms exist²¹, REA considers it is appropriate to reference them in its own guidance. Therefore, updates include recommending that testing is carried out in accordance with the testing methods outlined in the Tenancy Regulations.

²⁰ Above n3, at [25].

²¹ Testing methods that are not approved include:

- field composite tests, which combine swabs from more than one location and cannot identify whether specific locations are contaminated
- unvalidated testing kits, which may react to other substances, can be affected by poor sampling techniques, or can give inconsistent results.