



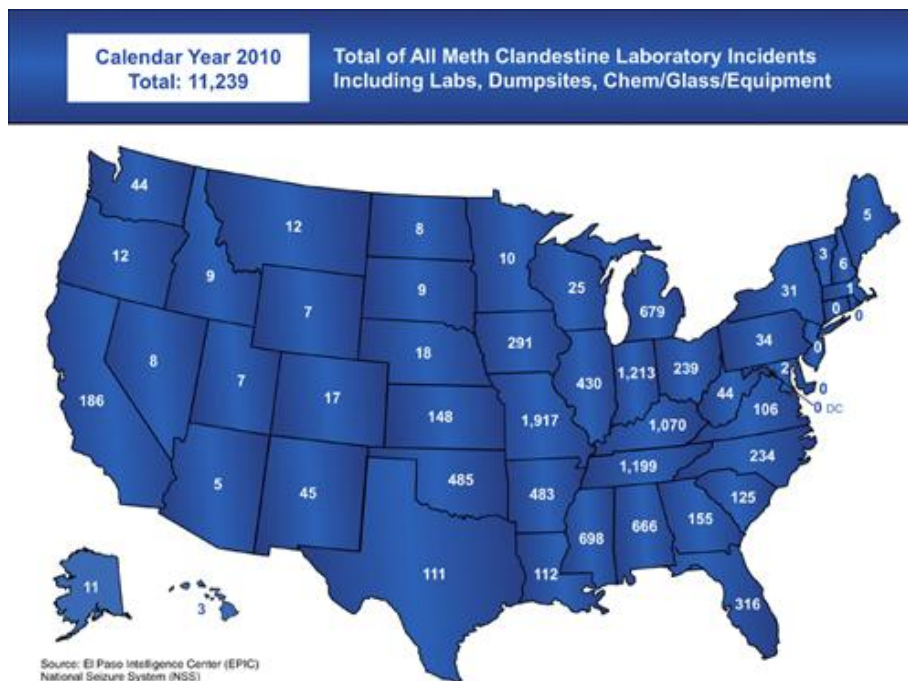
SAFETY & ENVIRONMENTAL ASSOCIATES, INC.

So You Are The Owner of a Property Used as a Meth Lab, Now What?

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Introduction

Clandestine methamphetamine (meth) laboratories have been a growing problem throughout Arkansas and across the nation. In Arkansas alone, the number of meth lab seizures reported has increased to epidemic proportions. Not all labs are reported.



What is Methamphetamine?

Methamphetamine or Meth is a drug; the most powerful central nervous system stimulant known to man. It has other names, such as "meth," "crank," "speed" or "ice," just to name a few. It is a highly addictive substance. Oftentimes after just one use, the user will be hooked. Meth can be found in the form of pills, capsules, powder, or chunks. It can be smoked/inhaled, snorted, injected, or eaten.

How is Meth made?

Meth is easily made with materials that are readily available. There are several techniques used to make meth. All of these processes use a variety of chemicals; including solvents, metals, salts, and corrosives (acids). During the drug manufacturing process (cooking), many additional compounds and byproducts are made. The fumes, vapors, and spillage associated with cooking can be toxic and is considered dangerous.

Where do meth labs occur?

Almost any property can be used as a meth lab. The more popular types are: rental properties, motel rooms, storage units, campgrounds, and out buildings in rural areas. A meth lab can easily be transported in the trunk of a car, which makes it portable to almost any location.

What happens when a lab is busted?

When a meth lab is found, the local law enforcement agencies, state crime lab and a DEA certified hazardous materials (HAZMAT) contractor come in to collect and list all evidence of the lab. This includes equipment, chemicals, and other materials used in the lab. This is called the **Primary Clean-up**.

According to the Drug Enforcement Agency (DEA), environmental harm has occurred at the property and appropriate clean-up methods must be accomplished.

“Environmental harm: The chemicals used to make meth are toxic, and the lab operators routinely dump waste into streams, rivers, fields, and sewage systems. The chemical vapors produced during cooking permeate the walls and carpets of houses and buildings, making them uninhabitable...” www.dea.gov

The decontamination process that occurs after the law enforcement agencies primary clean up is called a **Secondary Clean-up or Decontamination**.

What Are Some Signs That a Property is Being Used as a Meth Lab?

- Strong odor of solvents or ammonia,
- Residences with the windows blacked out,
- Iodine or chemical stained bathroom or kitchen fixtures,
- Renters who pay in cash,
- Increased activity at night,
- Excessive trash,
- Unusual tarnishing or deterioration of metal coated fixtures. (Hinges, fans etc.)

What is Decontamination (Secondary Clean-up)?

Decontamination is the process of neutralizing or removing the chemical contamination left behind after a meth lab. This is not general cleaning using household cleaners found in retail stores. Decontamination requires a sophisticated knowledge of the chemicals and byproducts. Some chemicals used in the manufacturing of meth reach violently with these cleaners, for example lithium metal, used in meth cooking, reacts with water and can be explosive.

What does "unfit for use" mean?

It means that the property may contain toxic chemicals and byproducts and must be decontaminated or proven to be non-contaminated by scientific analysis before it can be reused.

NOTICE: Entry into this site before testing or decontamination is prohibited and is considered a violation of the law punishable by imprisonment and/or fines.

The property is posted to protect you and the public using this or a similar posting.

WARNING

This notice has been posted pursuant to the Controlled Substances Contaminated Property Cleanup Act, (A.C.A. §§ 8-7-1401 - 1407), by order of the Director of the Arkansas Department of Environmental Quality (ADEQ).


On _____ a laboratory for the manufacture of controlled substances and/or hazardous chemicals
(Date)

was seized at this location _____
(Street#, Apt.#, Room#, Vehicle#, or Legal Description, City)

_____ by _____
(Law Enforcement Agency and Contact Number)

Known hazardous chemicals and/or equipment used in the manufacturing process have been disposed of pursuant to law. However, there may still be hazardous substances, toxic chemicals or other waste products on the property or in the case of a space-rental mobile home or a recreational vehicle park, in the unit located on the property. It is unlawful for any person other than a law enforcement officer, ADEQ personnel, the property owner, or a representative of the property owner if the representative has signed a waiver of liability, to enter this property until ADEQ establishes that any portion of the property identified as residually contaminated has been properly remediated. Violating, disturbing, or destroying this posted notice is a Class B misdemeanor and is punishable under state law by up to ninety (90) days of imprisonment and five hundred (\$500) dollars in fines. Violators should be reported immediately to local law enforcement officials or to ADEQ.

For more information contact:
Arkansas Department of Environmental Quality
Controlled Substance Contaminated Property Cleanup
501-683-1552
www.adeq.state.ar.us/hazwaste/branch_programs/clccp.htm



WARNING

All properties seized by law enforcement agencies that are considered contaminated are listed on a public website and the property cannot be rented, sold, or occupied until removed from this list.

Methamphetamine Contaminated Properties
 Hazardous Waste Division
 Thomas Hunting, Controlled Substance Contaminated Property Cleanup Coordinator - (501) 683-1552

Arkansas Code Annotated, §§ 8-7-1401 et seq, requires ADEQ to maintain a list of properties believed to be contaminated by the illegal manufacture of drugs. The following properties were reported to ADEQ by a complaint or report from a law enforcement agency and the Department has determined that reasonable evidence exists that the property is contaminated. 10 days after ADEQ has determined that the property has been decontaminated, it will be removed from this list.

County	City	Location	Bust Date	Received By ADEQ
Ashley	Crossett	125 E. Church St.	11/14/2008	12/19/2008
Ashley	North Crossett	111 Reeves Road	01/23/2009	02/16/2009
Ashley	Fountain Hill	398 W. Hwy. 160 Box #398	04/15/2009	04/23/2009
Baxter	Mt. Home	Windmill Ln. Box #106	01/12/2009	01/20/2009
Benton	Lowell	12365 Tyson Rd.	09/24/2008	10/03/2008
Benton	Gateway	22168 Hwy. 62 (Abandoned Cabin)	11/18/2008	12/04/2008
Benton	Pea Ridge	16832 Green Ridge Rd.	12/04/2008	02/27/2009
Benton	Siloam Springs	23186 W. Spring Harbor (Barn)	12/17/2008	01/09/2009
Benton	Springdale	3150 N. 48th	01/21/2009	01/30/2009
Benton	Lowell	105 Jackson	02/20/2009	02/24/2009
Benton	Lowell	2016 Zion Church Rd.	02/28/2009	04/23/2009
Benton	Decatur	22415 Davis Valley Rd.	03/07/2009	04/23/2009
Benton	Siloam Springs	977 Oak Crest	04/22/2009	05/07/2009
Boone	Harrison	S. Liberty St. Unit #623	12/09/2008	12/19/2008
Boone	Omaha	Pinecrest Rd. Box #12614	03/29/2009	04/23/2009
Carroll	Eureka Springs	468 Passion Play Rd. (Campground site #26)	05/04/2008	09/02/2008

Who is responsible for cleaning up the property?

The owner of the property is ultimately responsible for clean up. The owner is also legally responsible if persons get sick after they re-enter a contaminated site.

In other words, the owner has the legal duty to make sure the property is “safe” or fit-for-occupancy” before they can allow anyone in the property. Failure to do this may be considered gross negligence and can subject the property owner to extreme liabilities.

If the police take the equipment and materials used to make Meth, why do I have to clean up the property?

During the manufacturing process it is possible that contamination from dust, powder, gases and vapors released during the cooking process were left on surfaces and absorbed into materials, such as carpets, furniture, drapes, wallboard, ceiling tiles, sinks, drains and ventilation systems. The soil or groundwater outside the building may also become contaminated if chemicals were spilled or dumped on the ground or disposed in a septic system.

How is a property cleaned up?

1 The first step in decontamination or clean up is to determine if the property is contaminated above the States' clean up threshold of five-hundredths of a microgram per hundred square centimeters of surface area ($0.05\mu\text{g}/100\text{cm}^2$). An Arkansas Department of Environmental Quality (ADEQ) certified clandestine lab remediation contractor must do the testing or sampling using the best available technology to avoid future liabilities. Then recommendations can be submitted to determine the next steps, which may be decontamination and/or renovation.

Typical pre-decontamination sampling fees range from \$700 up depending on how many rooms, appliances, furnishing, and fixtures are in the building.



TIP: If you know the property was used as a meth lab and has a high probability of being contaminated, skip the pre-decontamination sampling and apply that towards your decontamination.

2

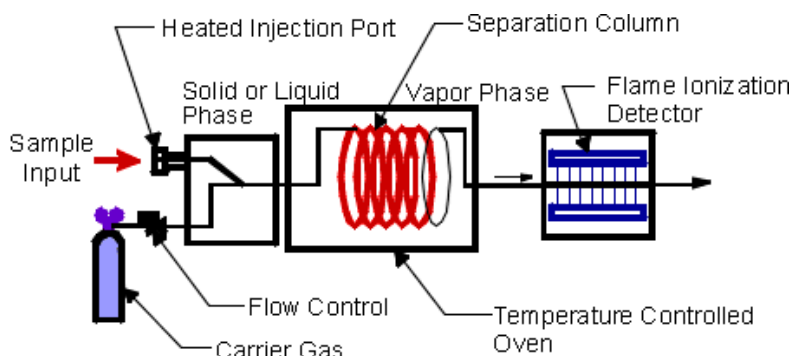
The second step is Decontamination or Clean-up by an ADEQ certified contractor. As we mentioned earlier, Decontamination is the process of neutralizing or removing the chemical contamination left behind after a meth lab. Once the pre-sampling has been completed or the owner by knowledge of the site declared it to be contaminated the ADEQ certified contractor will give you a bid on the cost of clean up.

Typical clean-up fees ranges are from \$1,500 to \$15,000 per site depending on the size of the structure, amount of chemicals used and the extent of the contamination (how clean they cooked).

3

The third step is Clearance Sampling. Clearance sampling is used to prove that the property has been decontaminated below the states re-occupancy limit of $0.05\mu\text{g}/100\text{cm}^2$ so it can be "Certified" Clean by ADEQ and removed from the public list of contaminated properties. Your contractor will collect samples and send them to a laboratory for analysis.

The lab uses a process called gas chromatography (GC) or liquid chromatography (LC). These methods are effective in detecting methamphetamine and determining the concentration. The GC/LC analysis can determine if you are at or above the $0.05\mu\text{g}/100\text{cm}^2$ limits. Chromatography analysis is currently one of the best methods to determine clearance.





The final step is to get clearance on your property. Once the ADEQ certified contractor get the results from the lab, and all samples indicated that they are below the state clearance limit, the contractor will send a report to the ADEQ Controlled Substance Contaminated Property Cleanup Coordinator and request that the property be cleared and removed from the list. The coordinator will review the report and if everything is in order will send a “Letter of Clearance” to the property owner and remove the property from the public list.

Once you receive the clearance letter, you may do what you wish to the property (rent, sell, trade, remodel etc.).

Can Laboratories provide a Clearance Certification?

No, only an ADEQ Certified Clandestine Lab Contractor can review the lab results and provide a report to ADEQ for clearance certification. Most laboratories only provide the analytical services or results for the site.

What Insurance should contractors who sample, test and/or provide clearance have?

At a minimum, the contractor who provides these services must have \$1,000,000 per incident in general liability insurance and \$2,000,000 aggregate for personal or property damage, \$1,000,000 errors and omissions, \$3,000,000 pollution liability, additional insurance such as worker’s compensation. The better the coverage the better you are protected from liabilities.

How long will it take to get the property cleaned up?

It usually takes one or two weeks for a contractor to clean up the contaminated property. Again, it depends on the size of the structure and the extent of contamination.

Can I go back into the property to get personal belongings?

Under certain circumstances this can be done, but only after law enforcement officers have completed their investigation and the assessment indicates that your safety will not jeopardized during this entry. Enter into the property to retrieve personal belongings can be dangerous and is AT YOUR OWN RISK.

What health risks are associated with the property?

Until testing has occurred, the level and extent of contamination cannot be accurately determined. Based on government guidelines from DEA, EPA, and OSHA for Hazardous Waste Operations and Emergency Response, the property must be considered highly contaminated until proven differently.

Potential health effects depend on:

- the specific chemicals a person is exposed to,
- how much of each chemical a person was exposed to,
- how long a person was exposed, and
- the health condition of the person being exposed.

The most common and persistent contaminate is the meth itself. Exposure to meth residue may cause symptoms similar to those experienced by the meth users themselves.

People, who enter a drug lab, after a police bust has been completed but before it has been properly cleaned, may feel headaches, nausea, dizziness, and fatigue. These symptoms usually go away after several hours of non-exposure.

People who enter a lab during, or immediately after, a drug bust may experience shortness of breath, cough, chest pain, dizziness, lack of coordination, burns, and even death.

How can I find out if a property was used as a meth lab?

Your local law enforcement agency or regional drug task force has a list of homes that were used as meth labs. Additionally, they are required to enter specific data into their EPIC system. This database is used by mortgage agencies to assess their liability in lending money on high-risk properties. A partial listing can be found on the DEA websites National Clandestine Laboratory Register. www.dea.gov/seizures/index.html Additionally, the Arkansas Department of Environmental Quality (ADEQ) site can be found at http://www.adeq.state.ar.us/hazwaste/branch_programs/clcc_list.asp

How Do I Prevent My Property From Becoming Another Meth Lab?

Interview prospective renters in person, do a background check, check references thoroughly, and strongly advise them as to what can be stored on the rented property (i.e., a commercial painter could be storing paint and solvents which are a fire hazard).

My neighbor's home was busted as a meth lab, how does this affect me?

It probably will not affect you, but if you have health concerns, talk to your doctor.

Who to Call: To report a suspected lab:

Local Law Enforcement Call: 3-1-1

Regional Drug Task Force

Drug Enforcement Agency

For more information or assistance:

Safety & Environmental Associates, Inc.

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11621 Kanis Road

Little Rock, AR 72221-2608

www.seainc.net

1-888-627-8740 or 501-568-3111

Sources (Special Thanks)

4th Judicial Drug Task Force
5th Judicial Drug Task Force
Arkansas County Sheriff's Office
Arkansas Crime Information Center
Arkansas Crime Lab
Arkansas Democrat-Gazette
Arkansas Department of Health
Arkansas Drug Task Force
Arkansas Highway Police
Arkansas Meth Summit Information
Arkansas Narcotics Officers Association
Arkansas State Police
Associated Press
Centers for Disease Control and Prevention
Conway Police Department
Criminal Investigation Division
Criminal Investigation Unit
Department of Transportation
Domestic Cannabis Eradication/Suppression Program
Drug Enforcement Administration
El Dorado Police Department
El Paso Intelligence Center
Environmental Protection Agency
Fayetteville Police Department
Federal Bureau of Investigation
Fort Smith Police Department
Franklin County Sheriff's Office
Garland County Sheriff's Office
Greene County Sheriff's Office
Greenwood Police Department
Hot Springs Police Department
Jonesboro Police Department
KATV: Channel 7 News (Scott Inman)
KLRT: Fox 16 News (Kevin Kelly)
KTHV: Today's THV (Todd Wilson)
Little Rock Police Department
Morrilton Police Department
Narcotics and Vice Unit
National Household Survey on Drug Abuse
National Institute of Health
National Institute of Occupational Health
National Institute on Drug Abuse
North Little Rock Police Department
Oklahoma Highway Patrol
Organized Crime Drug Enforcement Task Force
Pine Bluff Police Department
Poinsett County Sheriff's Office
Polk County Sheriff's Office
Pulaski County Sheriff's Office
Searcy Police Department
Siloam Police Department
Springdale Police Department
State of Arkansas
Stuttgart Police Department
Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration
System to Retrieve Information from Drug Evidence
Texarkana Police Department
The Benton County Daily Record
The Jonesboro Sun
The National Center on Addiction and Substance Abuse
Times Record
Treatment Episode Data Set
U.S. Attorney's Office
U.S. Census Bureau
U.S. Department of Commerce
U.S. Department of Health and Human Services

U.S. Department of Justice
U.S. Sentencing Commission
U.S. Department of Justice
U.S. Drug Enforcement Agency
Washington County Sheriff's Office
West Memphis Police Department
Youth Risk Behavior Survey