



CRA BULLETIN

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Signed: _____ Dated: _____

METHAMPHETAMINE (METH, P, ICE) IN VEHICLES

Testing for methamphetamine (meth, P, ice) is becoming more common place in people and properties throughout New Zealand as the drug gains a foot hold in our communities across the country.

Reports of meth contamination are becoming more common in many houses and flats as prospective landlords, renters and buyers of properties want to know if the house or flat they are living in - or want to buy - has a meth contamination problem.

But what about cars, vans and trucks? Is buying, driving in and working on these vehicles a health hazard?

The truth is that there is very little testing data or evidence available about vehicle tests now, as very few vehicles are being tested. Therefore, the type, incidence and percentage of vehicles showing any levels of contamination are not yet known.

However, it follows from experience gained in houses that, if a vehicle is significantly contaminated then it will pose a health risk to some (unknown) degree.

Houses can be relatively high health risks because of the amount of time that people spend in them. The same can be said of some drivers or outfitters of trucks, vans and cars. They spend all day and sometimes all night in the vehicle and are at some risk of being exposed to meth residues if the vehicle is contaminated.

Conversely those who spend relatively short lengths of time in and around a vehicle will have a lesser adverse health risk. This might include outfitters on smaller jobs, mechanics and panelbeaters.

The history of a vehicle is important when assessing whether a vehicle is likely to be a health risk. Is the vehicle stolen, do the Police know of any issues with the vehicle (gang or criminal related connections etc) or does it have evidence of drug use / misuse? While gaining reliable information is often difficult, a cautious approach may be advisable. If in doubt - get it tested.

Meth is casually ingested into the human body mainly via breathing meth that is 'de gassing' from the environment, or orally from touching meth contaminated surfaces. This is why children are at risk as they will lick their hands that may have been in contact with a meth contaminated surface. Therefore, likely hot spots in a car may be:

- ventilation / AC systems
- ceiling of the vehicle
- hard surfaces in the vehicle
- often used surfaces in the vehicle - steering wheels and dashboards
- porous materials in the vehicle that may act as a 'sink' - carpets, seats etc

Another area for concern is when a vehicle is being bought and sold. Is the owner aware of contamination? How does the prospective purchaser know if the vehicle is clear of contamination or not? There is no known way of knowing by looking at it, smelling it or telling from stains, dents, or wear and tear. If in doubt - get it tested.

The vehicle sales, maintenance and repair industries are just now starting to ask questions about meth contamination of vehicles they drive and operate, work on or in and buy, sell or transact. Owners, managers, supervisors and workers are wondering what they should be doing to discharge their responsibilities to the Health and Safety at Work Act. Reliable data is in short supply and so, as with all things that pose a risk, the prudent course of action is - if there is any doubt, test and find out.