

# Tips for Landlords

## It is estimated that 50% of methamphetamine labs are found on rental property.

Methamphetamine is manufactured using common, legal, household ingredients, that when combined, produce toxic and potentially explosive fumes. This process poses a substantial risk of injury or death, from contamination, toxic gases, fire or explosion, to those who live in or near the labs.

## Property owners are responsible for decontamination costs that can range from \$5,000 to over \$100,000.

It is estimated that six pounds of toxic waste is produced for each pound of methamphetamine manufactured, which is often dumped down drains or wells or simply on the ground, contaminating soil and polluting water for years. Residue contaminates carpet and painted walls and permeates through ventilation systems. A home often cannot be sold or rented until it has undergone an extensive cleaning process by those trained in dealing with hazardous waste.

### THE COSTS TO PROPERTY OWNERS:

- Civil penalties: neighbors and/or other tenants have sued owners in other states.
- Property damage
- Decline in property value
- Dangerous tenants
- Loss of valued tenants

### PROTECT YOURSELF:

At the time of rental application--

- Ensure the application is complete
- Conduct background checks
  - Rental history
  - Credit report
  - Employment history
  - Criminal background
- Meet every adult that will be living in the property and require picture identification
- Be aware of renter's appearance and behaviors
- Keep in contact with neighbors
- Develop a neighborhood watch program
- Maintain your property on a regular basis
  - Drive by often
  - Schedule visits with tenants
  - Talk with neighbors

**For more information on methamphetamine and related concerns, contact the Maine Methamphetamine Prevention Project at (207) 621-8118 or [www.methwatchme.org](http://www.methwatchme.org)**

# Possible Meth Lab Activity

## BE AWARE OF THE SIGNS

### UNUSUAL SECURITY/VENTILATION MEASURES

- Baby room monitors being used outdoors.
- Video surveillance systems positioned to observe exterior of home.
- Elaborate fencing and heavy-duty locks when it is not evident what is being secured.
- Numerous fans or industrial-type fans positioned to ventilate the home.
- Alarm systems and large, protective dogs

### CHEMICAL ODORS ASSOCIATED WITH METH PRODUCTION:

- Ether-like: Aromatic, sweet odor often accompanied by a sweet taste. Sometimes described as a "hospital odor". **Nasal irritant.**
- Solvent-like: Sweet odor from common solvents used in paint thinners, paint removers, adhesives and cleaning fluids. Type of odor often found in an auto body shop. **Eye & nasal irritant.**
- Ammonia-like: An intense, sharp, irritating odor similar but much stronger than that from wet diapers, glass cleaners, cattle feedlots or fertilizers. **Eye & nasal irritant.**

### ADDITIONAL INDICATORS OF A METH LAB:

- Numerous chemical containers, matchbooks with striker plates removed, abundance of cold tablet containers.
- Reddish stained coffee filters, canning jars with multi-colored liquids, aquarium-type tubing used in bottles.
- Battery casings, crumpled/burnt foil.
- Windows blackened out or covered.
- People in and around methamphetamine manufacturing may exhibit respiratory irritation and/or chemical burns to skin.

### INDICATORS OF METH USE:

- Dilated pupils
- Restlessness/agitation
- Paranoia and hallucinations
- Hyperactivity and compulsiveness
- Aggressiveness and violent behavior
- Talkativeness

**If you suspect methamphetamine production, leave the area immediately and contact your local law enforcement agency.**