



# Cabinet Social Outcomes Committee

## Minute of Decision

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### Regulations for Managing Methamphetamine Contamination in Rental Housing

**Portfolio**                      **Associate Housing**

On 10 September 2025, the Cabinet Social Outcomes Committee:

#### Background

- 1        **noted** that there are currently no legislatively binding rules about the management of methamphetamine contamination in rental housing, which has led to confusion and disproportionate and costly responses to low levels of methamphetamine residue that evidence shows are unlikely to pose any risk;
- 2        **noted** that section 138C of the Residential Tenancies Act 1986 (the Act) enables regulations to prescribe rules for managing methamphetamine contamination in rental housing, including maximum acceptable and inhabitable levels of methamphetamine, landlord requirements, and management processes for decontamination and abandoned goods;

#### Regulated levels of methamphetamine residue

- 3        **agreed** that the maximum acceptable level of methamphetamine residue is 15µg/100cm<sup>2</sup>, and that premises testing above this level should be cleaned to 15µg/100cm<sup>2</sup> or less;
- 4        **noted** that the Institute of Environmental Science and Research (ESR) has advised there is insufficient evidence to define a maximum inhabitable level of methamphetamine;
- 5        **noted** that not setting a maximum inhabitable level will create further uncertainty for the sector, leaving the Tenancy Tribunal to determine what the threshold for habitability in respect of methamphetamine residue should be;
- 6        **agreed** that the maximum inhabitable level of methamphetamine residue is 30µg/100cm<sup>2</sup>, which will mean that, in addition to the requirement to decontaminate the premises, tenancies can be terminated if professional tests show levels exceed this;

#### Landlords' responsibilities for managing methamphetamine residue

- 7        **agreed** that landlords will be required to engage accredited testing professionals to carry out detailed assessment for methamphetamine contamination when either:
  - 7.1      Police or the relevant council advises there was, or it is likely that there was, methamphetamine manufacturing on the premises; or

- 7.2 a tenant, landlord, or any other person has carried out a permitted screening assessment for methamphetamine residue in the premises in accordance with the regulations, and this has shown results exceeding  $15\mu\text{g}/100\text{cm}^2$ ;
- 8 **agreed** that, where premises show levels of methamphetamine residue exceed  $15\mu\text{g}/100\text{cm}^2$  following a detailed assessment, landlords are required to:
- 8.1 ensure premises are decontaminated in line with the prescribed process;
- 8.2 ensure another detailed assessment is carried out after decontamination, confirming levels do not exceed  $15\mu\text{g}/100\text{cm}^2$ ;
- 8.3 ensure that, to avoid any conflict of interest, any testing professional used for screening or detailed assessment is independent from any professional contracted to carry out decontamination;
- 9 **agreed** that, where premises continue to be provided to the tenant, landlords must fulfil the obligations in paragraphs 7 and 8 above as soon as practicable;
- 10 **noted** that the Act does not currently enable a landlord to require a tenant to move out for decontamination works, and officials will consider whether a new termination ground is needed for this purpose as part of post-implementation monitoring;

### Testing requirements

- 11 **agreed** that anyone can carry out screening assessments for methamphetamine residue as long as they use acceptable testing methods in accordance with test instructions, however if a professional is paid to do screening assessment, they must meet appropriate requirements;
- 12 **agreed** that only qualified professionals can carry out detailed assessment for methamphetamine residue;
- 13 **agreed** that in terms of permitted types of testing:
- 13.1 any discrete/individual sampling plus laboratory testing (including laboratory composite testing) and accredited screening test kits are acceptable methods of testing for methamphetamine under the regulations;
- 13.2 field composite tests and unvalidated testing kits are not acceptable methods of testing for methamphetamine under the regulations;
- 13.3 unless a validated testing kit is being used, all samples need to be analysed and reported on by accredited laboratories;

### Decontamination process

- 14 **noted** that a landlord cannot begin a new tenancy for a premises that they know is contaminated, and that if a tenancy had already begun before the contamination was discovered, the landlord may continue to rent the premises to the tenant only if the premises are being decontaminated as per the prescribed process;
- 15 **agreed** that the prescribed decontamination process is largely as set out in section 4 of the New Zealand Standard 8501:2017 *Testing and decontamination of methamphetamine-contaminated properties* (the Standard), with minor adjustments;
- 16 **agreed** that a landlord can appoint anyone to carry out decontamination works, or can undertake the work themselves;

**Rules for managing abandoned goods on contaminated premises**

- 17 **agreed** that the requirements for dealing with abandoned goods in contaminated premises (premises testing above 15µg/100cm<sup>2</sup>) are similar to the existing process in the Act, which applies to abandoned goods in non-contaminated premises, with the key distinctions being that:
- 17.1 the landlord must deal with the abandoned goods as if they are contaminated;
  - 17.2 the landlord must make all reasonable efforts to assess the market value of the goods together with the likely cost of testing, decontamination (where possible), storage, transport, and sale;
  - 17.3 where any of the goods have a value below the costs set out in paragraph 17.2 above, or where the goods are unable to be stored, tested or decontaminated, the landlord may securely dispose of the goods, and
  - 17.4 where any of the goods have a value above the costs set out in paragraph 17.2 above and storage, testing and decontamination are possible, the landlord must securely store the goods for at least 35 days, and after that, if unclaimed, may decontaminate, re-test, and sell the goods;

**Next steps**

- 18 **noted** that the Associate Minister of Housing (the Associate Minister) intends to issue a press release and inform key stakeholders about the regulations at an appropriate time;
- 19 **invited** the Associate Minister to issue instructions to the Parliamentary Counsel Office to give effect to the above decisions;
- 20 **authorised** the Associate Minister to make final decisions on minor and technical changes that are consistent with the policy intent in the paper under SOU-25-SUB-0120;
- 21 s 9(2)(f)(iv) [REDACTED]
- 22 **noted** that officials will commission Standards New Zealand to instigate a review of the Standard, to ensure consistency with the final regulations.

Jenny Vickers  
Committee Secretary

**Present:**

Rt Hon Winston Peters  
Hon Chris Bishop  
Hon Simeon Brown (Chair)  
Hon Dr Shane Reti  
Hon Mark Mitchell  
Hon Tama Potaka  
Hon Nicole McKee  
Hon Casey Costello  
Hon Penny Simmonds  
Hon Karen Chhour  
Hon Nicola Grigg  
Hon Scott Simpson

**Officials present from:**

Office of the Prime Minister  
Officials Committee for SOU  
Ministry of Housing and Urban Development