Clandestine Drug Labs and their Lasting Effect on Children and the Community

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CONTENTS

WHAT ARE CLANDESTINE DRUG LABS?
HOW ARE THEY DISCOVERED?
WHO IS RESPONSIBLE?
IS TESTING REQUIRED?
IS DECONTAMINATION REQUIRED?

OVERSIGHT RESOURCES & AUTHORITY
DISCLOSURE
WHAT IS THE PROCESS - TESTING TO "FIT FOR USE"?
EFFECTS ON COMMUNITIES
EFFECTIVE ENFORCEMENT

WHAT ARE CLANDESTINE DRUG LABS?
Any site where the illegal manufacture of illicit drugs or controlled substances are made, stored or used. This includes methamphetamine, ecstasy, PCP, GHB, LSD and marijuana grow operations.
HOW ARE THEY DISCOVERED?

Police on domestic calls
Neighbors comments to potential buyers
Fire or explosion
Investigation and warrant execution

Statistically only 1 in 10 meth labs are discovered in the U.S.
In some states only 1 in 30
By the time a cook is caught 10 more have been taught

WHO IS RESPONSIBLE?

Home owners are primarily responsible for all costs associated with the testing and decontamination
Some states do have compensatory laws applied to the cook

Some insurance policies will cover costs
There is no federal or state funding available to assist

IS TESTING REQUIRED?

All sites must undergo a preliminary site assessment prior to remediation
Pre sampling is not always required

Alabama 43.96 x limit
Tennessee 116.6 x limit
**IS DECONTAMINATION REQUIRED?**

Decontamination may or may not be required.

Currently only one state requires remediation where sampling shows compliant levels.

Most states and hundreds of counties have regulations.

All have established a standard.

Where no regulations apply, decontamination should still be performed.

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**OVERSIGHT / RESOURCES & AUTHORITY**

Contractors must report in most regulated jurisdictions.

Authority is based on either state or local regulations or ordinances.

Many jurisdictions require contractors to be certified.

Many will maintain a list of approved contractors for the public.

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**DISCLOSURE**

Currently 23 states have disclosure laws in place.

This includes some states that do not have regulations or standards.

Disclosure is required for any rent agreement, lease agreement or sale.

After decontamination and certified as fit for use, exoneration from disclosure applies.

Disclosure laws are difficult to enforce; more effective if a separate written disclosure form was required.

Law enforcement quarantine notification on property records.

Quality contaminated property listings.
THE DECONTAMINATION PROCESS
The decontamination begins with removal of contaminated debris, absorbent materials and non structural components
Decontamination is performed
Final sampling is always required

EFFECTS ON CHILDREN & COMMUNITIES
55% increase in burglaries and robberies; including increase in mail and vehicle theft
48% increase in reported domestic violence cases
63% increase in the work load of public safety staff; 73% increase in overtime payments
1 in 2 incarcerated for methamphetamine related crimes
50% adults in MT prisons for meth related crimes; $60M a year. 20% for meth treatment; $6M a year
Increase in gang related activities
83% increase of meth related hospital visits to emergency rooms; impact to health care systems
Average decontamination costs $4,000 to $20,000
Remediation of dump sites from toxic chemicals
Squatters in vacant homes cooking meth
Child neglect and abuse continues to rise
Increased need for meth treatment programs
Loss of productivity from employees under the influence
Tax payer burden from greater need for public safety, foster care, increased use of the judicial system, welfare, etc
Special education department tasked with teaching children who have been exposed to caustic materials and have suffered psychological effects from prolonged exposure

Discovery of a meth lab effects home values; decrease in sale prices of 10% - 19% within 1/8 to ¼ quarter mile of the laboratory; within 1 to 2 years of discovery
Mixing of chemicals highly volatile; creates risk of chemical burns, fires, toxic fumes and explosion
Discovery may require law enforcement / fire department to evacuate the neighborhood; hours to days
Property damage (both interior and exterior) from tenant misuse and neglect; collection of garbage and junk
Forced closure of the property; loss in rental income
"Good" renters may move out
Disoriented, potentially violent visitors to the neighborhood
EFFECTIVE ENFORCEMENT
Task forces targeting meth made up of city, county, state law and federal law enforcement agencies combining resources
Federal prosecution and increased penalties
Sentencing enhancement for child endangerment, environmental damage and other related criminal offences
Federal, state and county methamphetamine lab property listings
Precursor restrictions have only temporary effect on the prices and quantity of meth in the US; Mexican cartels fill the void
State quarantine and decontamination regulations; enforcement remanded to counties with ability to collect permit fees for additional needed resources: personnel, training and equipment
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