



29 June 2017

For immediate release

REINZ: Methamphetamine Standards provide welcome clarity for the industry

If you are writing on today's Methamphetamine Testing Standards announcement from Standards New Zealand, please consider the following comment from Bindi Norwell, CEO, Real Estate Institute of New Zealand (REINZ):

"REINZ welcomes the announcement of today's New Zealand Standard for *The Testing and Decontamination of Methamphetamine-Contaminated Properties* (P8150) as it will begin to provide clarity for real estate agents, property managers, vendors and members of the public around testing and decontamination processes.

"Until now, there has been no standard across the country for methamphetamine testing or decontamination, which has resulted in some scaremongering and mis-information for members of the public around these processes. For example, it was not uncommon for a purchaser and vendor to test the same property but receive entirely different results. The Standard is a leap forward in preventing this kind of situation.

"The Standard will give property owners, landlords and property managers more confidence around test results which will help protect the health and safety of occupants.

"We have developed guidance for agents and property managers to assist them to understand the new Standard and reinforce their obligations when dealing with meth contaminated properties.

"However, it is still early days and we will be working with relevant industry bodies to understand how the Standard will be interpreted as there is no 'one size fits all' solution for agents when dealing with properties that are, or may be, contaminated with methamphetamine.

"The Standard is a big step in the right direction towards gaining certainty around whether a property is contaminated and, if so, how it should be decontaminated.

"REINZ has been heavily involved in the development of today's Standard as a member of the Methamphetamine National Standards Committee and is today hosting a series of seminars with real estate agents to inform them of the details of the Standard."

Advice to vendors

"If you suspect your property could be contaminated by methamphetamine, it is advised that you get the property tested by an accredited sampler, or assessor, to determine the level of contamination and therefore, any decontamination requirements."

Advice for purchasers

"It is important that purchasers carry out their own, thorough due diligence before purchasing a property. If they are concerned that a property may have been exposed to methamphetamine, they should obtain a test from an accredited sampler or assessor. The cost of a test is small comparative to the overall investment of purchasing a property."

Advice to agents

"If you suspect a property is contaminated you should immediately discuss the matter with your branch manager, supervisor and/or legal advisors as soon as you become aware that a property is, or may be, contaminated with methamphetamine.

"You will need to inform your client that under the Real Estate Agents Act (Professional Conduct and Client Care) Rules 2012, meth contamination is considered a property 'defect'. Rule 10.7 states where it appears likely that land may be subject to hidden or underlying defects, then a licensee must either obtain confirmation from the client, supported by evidence or expert advice, that the land in question is not subject to a defect, or permission to disclose any significant potential risk to prospective purchasers. Rule 10.8 states that if the vendor does not consent to disclosure, you must cease acting for them.

Agents should also advise potential purchasers to get the property tested should they believe there is a chance methamphetamine is present at a property."

ENDS

For further information, please contact Dee Crooks, Communications/PR Manager at REINZ, on 09 356 1753 or 021 953 308.