

METHAMPHETAMINE SAMPLING

DIY DISCRETE NOISH LABORATORY METH TESTING KITS INSTRUCTIONS



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HEALTH & SAFETY

It is important to comply with all health and safety laws and exercise a duty of care. You should be aware of your responsibilities.

RISK/SITE ASSESSMENT

This work will require you to go in to both vacant and occupied properties. Regardless, a risk assessment of the property is recommended. Talking to your customer prior to going to the site will give you some valuable information. Ask questions like:

- What is the reason for sampling the property?
- Do you suspect there has been a user in the property?
- Have the police been involved?
- Is it a rental property?
- Is the property still tenanted or have they moved out?
- Is there a dog at the property?

When entering a property whether it has been a lab or not, think about your personal safety and that of your team. If you are going out alone, make sure someone knows your itinerary for the day. Be aware of your surroundings at the property taking care not to expose yourself to unnecessary risks, for example you may want to lock the doors while taking samples in the property.

If you are going about your business and you do come across a functioning meth lab, it is important to leave immediately and call the police.

You may not know what the level of contamination within the property is. By doing a risk assessment you may have gained some idea of the potential contamination which should inform you on the type of PPE you should be wearing. If in doubt over protect yourself.

PERSONAL PROTECTIVE EQUIPMENT (PPE)

As the chemicals used in the manufacture and residues from meth use may remain in the property for many years, it is important to protect yourself from the effects of these chemicals. A contaminated property can affect you through your respiratory system, through the skin and by ingestion. Even short-term exposure can cause burning eyes, nose and/or throat, itchy skin, headaches, dizziness, nausea, fatigue and shortness of breath (depending on the level of contamination in the property, the length of time you are in the property and your current health). It is therefore very important to protect yourself and your team.

At a minimum, your PPE kit should consist of:

- **Gloves** — Thicker, medical nitril gloves are recommended. Gloves that are puncture resistant should be used if there is a possibility of coming in to contact with sharp objects (e.g. syringes). These should be changed on leaving and returning to the property and once used, dispose by placing in a plastic bag and tying the top. Do not use vinyl gloves as they can potentially contaminate samples and do not provide enough protection from chemicals.

- **Protector P2/Carbon disposable respirators** - are suitable for fumes and odours. The three-layer technology provides cup strength and minimal breathing resistance. A large valve allows for easy flow exhalation while an inner foam bridge provides an additional comfort and an improved seal. Certified to AS/NZS 1716:2012
- **Shoe Covers (booties)** —Shoe covers should be worn. Dispose of them with the rest of your waste.



You should also carry a sealable plastic bag for the disposal of the contaminated items once you have completed your sampling of the property. For the items that you aren't disposing of, i.e. respirators, ladders, mobile phones/cameras, a sanitising wipe should be used to remove any potential contamination. Do this after each job.

*IF IN DOUBT PROTECT YOURSELF.
REMEMBER YOUR SAFETY IS IMPORTANT.*

WHERE TO TEST AND WHY

Meth is used throughout society so the property you may be taking samples from could be a state house, an up-market apartment, a holiday home or even a hotel room.

Many of the properties you will sample will be the result of a user smoking meth in a property rather than manufacture. This said, caution should always be taken at any property being sampled. When determining where to sample several things should be taken into consideration.

Do not sample absorbent surfaces, e.g. sofas, curtains, carpets as the sampling kits aren't design for it and the results will not be accurate. These can only be analysed using destructive testing by sending a piece of the carpet/fabric to the lab.

Note: As furniture isn't part of the structure they should not be sampled unless a specific request has been made by your client. Keep the furniture samples separate from any samples taken from the building surfaces.

Hard painted or varnished surfaces that don't look like they've been recently cleaned or painted/varnished are good places to take samples. Varnished surfaces would bring back a higher result than a painted wall.

Airflow within a property happens due to various factors, fans and air conditioning units pushing or pulling air around, human movement (walking from place to place), doors opening and closing, drafts etc. This means that the contamination can spread to areas away from either the manufacturing site or where the user has smoked. It is therefore recommended that when taking samples in a property all rooms and hallways/corridors are sampled. The Australian Guidelines state at least 5 samples should be taken.

When doing your preliminary assessment of a property look for:

- Air conditioning units
- Recessed lights in the ceiling
- Extractor fans
- Ceiling fans
- Electrical circuit/fuse box

With an air conditioning unit, it may be pushing air to the other side of the room, a location where the airflow maybe heading is a logical place to take a sample. Recessed lights in the ceiling act like vents in to the roof cavity so the airflow may have dragged vapour upwards. Sample close to the light fitting. Vapour is also attracted to electrostatic energy so that's why a on or near fuse box or light switches are good places to take samples.

Another good place to sample would be the top of a door. Doors as they open and close create an air flow so deposits may have settled there. Also, the tops of doors are quite often not painted or lightly painted (these areas are seldom cleaned too). Therefore, using the template folded over the top of a door is fiddly but a good place to try.

There is also the potential that a property has been recently redecorated. Paint and wallpaper will mask meth contamination temporarily. In this case you will have to search for places to take a sample which hasn't been painted/decorated. Again, the top of the door may be a good place location.

Try to find the best place that does not require you to put yourself in any risk of harm. Some extraction fans vent straight in to the roof space, so sampling close to the vent is recommended.

Avoid sampling low air flow areas such as behind furniture, appliances or pictures/things attached to the wall. Also, avoid surfaces that have been recently cleaned or painted/decorated.

Areas to focus on	Areas to avoid
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Near, but not on, extraction fans, oven rangehoods and air conditioners • On top of surfaces that hold household dust and dander, such as on top of ceiling fan blades • Locations where a user may use, above or near comfortable sitting places, toilets and bathrooms • Locations where manufacture may have taken place such as above the laundry sink, in the garage or backyard shed • Any areas with yellow staining on walls • Any areas where younger residents may sleep 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Freshly painted surfaces • Areas that have obviously recently been wiped clean • Areas that are cleaned often • Areas that do not have a lot of texture such as glass and mirrors • Do not take samples from contents or carpets

TAKING SAMPLES

VISUAL INSPECTION

When you arrive at a property take notes of what you see. There may be debris or indications of an ex-lab or user site. Take note of anything outside and inside the property. Also note the size of the property with the amount of rooms, garages, outbuildings, etc.; whether it is an urban, suburban or property with land; whether it is occupied or not; whether personal belongings were still in the property and other information e.g. was there a detectable odour.

SAMPLING PLAN

If possible, conduct an informal Interview with clients, attempt to establish risk, and when the possible risk may have occurred. Determine the following:

- Any suspicion of drug use/manufacturing, reason for test
- Anything that indicated use of lab
- Who are the occupants, kids etc, any symptoms of exposure?
- Renting or owning
- When they moved in
- When was the property last painted?

Do NOT state whether you think it may be contaminated or not, your standard response is we cannot know until the lab has done its job

The interview will be your risk assessment as to whether you wear your PPE, and to help you determine the best locations for your samples

- IS IT SAFE? you may enter without PPE
- IS IT NOT SAFE? if suspected drug use or manufacture wear your PPE

Inspect whole house and decide where you want to take samples. 10 wipes in two test tubes are supplied with your kit, you can sample up to 10 areas.

HOW TO TAKE A SAMPLE

The kit should contain:

- 10 x vials with methanol-soaked swab(s) in each.
- A template with a 10cm x 10cm window.
- Laboratory Chain of custody form

You will need:

- Blue-tack or 3m blue painter tape.
- 10 pairs of nitril gloves.
- A fine tip permanent marker



Use the supplied template as a guide

- Each sample should be 100 square cm, the sample does not have to be 10cm x 10cm, it can be 20 x 5, or 33 x 3, etc or composite of areas that add up to 100 square cm. Be as accurate as possible

Wipe sampling techniques:

- Using the gloves remove a gauze wipe from its vial
- Place the template over the area to be sampled (use bluetac or 3M blue painters' tape to hold the template in place)
- For your sampling report (if required) take a photo of the labelled template, test location close up and three photos of the room. To assist in
- Wipe or dab the surface to be sampled with firm pressure depending on the chosen method
- Fold the gauze wipe, exposed side in, to expose a fresh side of the wipe between wipes
- Each 100cm² area should be wiped two - three times with the same wipe, depending on the chosen method
- Place the wipe in the labelled vial, and seal with the cap
- Change gloves between samples to avoid cross contamination of the swab.

METHOD ONE — CONCENTRIC SQUARES

Used on hard surfaces such as glass and ceramic tiles, etc. Take the gauze out of the vial and unroll it to create a flat surface. Within the template window, using firm pressure, wipe in a clockwise direction from one of the corners of the inside of the template window working your way in to the middle (Fig. 1) finishing with a scooping motion. Take the gauze and without touching anything else, fold the side you've just used to the inside and reveal a clean side. Again, using firm pressure wipe over the same area again in the same direction (Fig.2) again finishing with a scooping motion. Fold the gauze again and place it back in the vial.

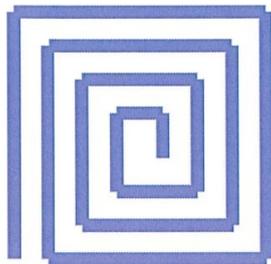


Fig. 1 1st wipe in clockwise direction

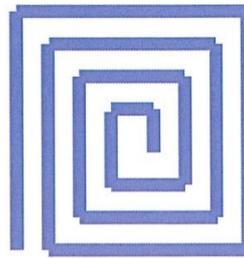


Fig.2 2nd wipe in clockwise direction again

METHOD TWO —SIDE TO SIDE

Used on painted gyprock, pinex, smooth timber, etc. Take the gauze and unfold it to create a flat surface, then firmly wipe within the template in a side to side (zig zag) action, completing the action in at least 5 wipes, see Fig.3 below. Finish with a scooping motion. Turn the used side to the inside, then wipe again in an up and down action completing the action in at least 5 wipes, (Fig.4), finishing with a scooping motion. Again, fold the gauze to expose another clean surface and wipe again in a side to side action (Fig.5). Fold the gauze again and place it back in the vial.

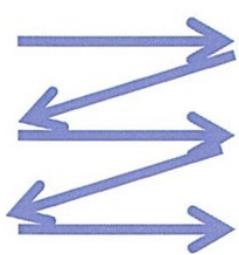


Fig.3 left to right

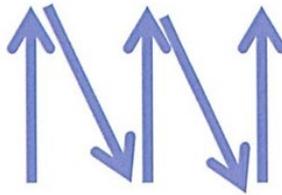


Fig.4 Up and down

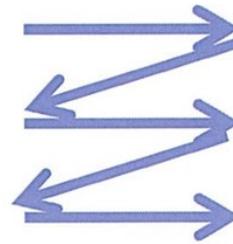


Fig.5 left to right

METHOD THREE — BLOTTING

Good for rough surfaces. Take the gauze out of the vial and use a dabbing motion. Dab the gauze on to the surface within the template window, lift the gauze and dab to the right slightly overlapping as you go. Do this at least 5 times within the window of the template until you reach the right-hand side. Dab just underneath your last dab and move to the left in the same manner zig-zagging your way to the bottom of the template window as per Fig.6. Once at the bottom fold the used side to the inside, exposing a clean surface then begin dabbing from the top left of the window to the bottom left of the window, use the same zig-zagging overlapping method as before (Fig. 7). Again, use a minimum of 5 dabs per line until you reach the right side of the template. Fold the gauze again and place it back in the vial.

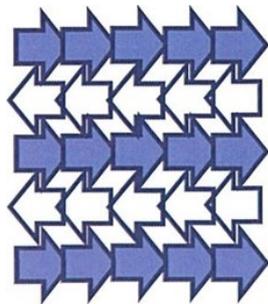


Fig.6 Dab horizontally

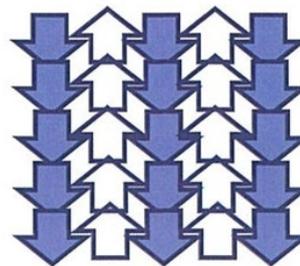


Fig. 7 Dab vertically

COMPLETING THE SCREENING

When replacing the gauze back in to the vial, it is important to make sure it is folded. This prevents the lab having to take out the gauze and handle it so that it is in the correct format for the lab testing to begin.

- It is suggested for your own records that you take photos of the front of the property, sample locations, photos of the room, the completed samples, Chain of Custody document and the express post tracking number.
- Ensure the vials are labelled with, job number, date, location and sample numbers
- Complete the **Chain of Custody** document detailing sample locations. You need to fill out the Chain of Custody (COC) form as accurately as possible. This form traces the sample from beginning to end.
- Put samples in express post bag with the Chain of Custody document, check you have them all, then seal the bag
- Make sure you sign the airfreight waver on the front of the express post bag, just below the send to address panel
- Drop express post bag at Australia post business centre or post office if you can, if not drop bag in a YELLOW express post bin before 6:00pm,

Samples will be stable for 7 days at room temperature, but refrigeration is recommended.