

Utah State Health Department Exceeding State Authority on Methamphetamine Testing Standards

Meth Testing:

In Utah, there are two kinds of tests for methamphetamine contamination, as defined by the EPA.¹

In discrete sampling, also known as “individual” sampling, single samples are taken at spatially discrete locations. This sampling technique should be used in areas that are “hot spots” highly suggestive of contamination. R392-600-5 says areas highly suggestive of contamination must be tested by this method.

In composite sampling, multiple discrete samples are combined and treated as a single sample for analytical purposes. The State and County Health departments allow this sampling technique because they say it is less costly for consumers.

However, the State Health Departments is exceeding its authority by allowing testers to use the “compiling” instead of “averaging” method. This results in more properties failing and more work for decontamination specialists.

Here is a description of each of type of testing:

Contamination Limit - Less than or equal to 1.0 microgram (μg) Methamphetamine per 100 square centimeters.

Discrete Testing:

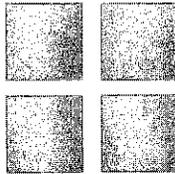
One sample of 100 cm^2 must contain less than 1.0 μg of Methamphetamine.



This 100 cm^2 area contains 0.3 μg of Methamphetamine and is not considered contaminated under Utah law.

Composite Testing (averaged)

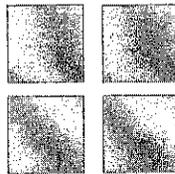
Combined samples of more than 100 cm^2 must contain less than 1.0 μg of Methamphetamine per 100 cm^2 .



These four separate 100 cm^2 area contain an average of 0.3 μg of Methamphetamine and is not considered contaminated under Utah law.

Composite Testing (compiled)

Combined samples of more than 100 cm^2 must contain less than 1.0 μg of Methamphetamine total (meaning they treat 400 cm^2 like 100 cm^2 , effectively reducing the amount allowed by 75%, exceeding state authority).



These four separate 100 cm^2 area contain a total of 1.2 μg of Methamphetamine and would fail the compiled composite test allowed by the Health Department, despite not being truly contaminated under Utah law. **This makes the effective standard 0.25 $\mu\text{g}/100 \text{cm}^2$**

Despite bringing to their attention multiple properties that failed under compiled composite testing that would not have failed if averaging (the scientific standard) was used, the County and State health Departments still refuse to back down. We have made several attempts to get them to operate within their authority and have failed.

Whether allowing compiled composite sampling is crony capitalism to generate more business for decontamination specialists or just sloppy science, it exceeds the Health Department’s authority and the real estate and property management industry ask the Administrative Rules Oversight Committee to intervene.

Utah R392-600 requires:

- Samples collected from areas highly suggestive of contamination shall be by grab samples that are not combined with other samples.ⁱ
- "Grab Sample" means one sample collected from a single, defined area or media at a given time and location.ⁱⁱ
- Confirmation sampling from areas not highly suggestive of contamination... shall be collected in a manner consistent with the confirmation sampling [procedure laid out in the rule]. The samples may be combined together to form one sample per room or sampling area.^{iv} [NO COMPILING OF SAMPLES IS ALLOWED BY STATUE]

ⁱ EAP *Voluntary Guides for Methamphetamine Laboratory Cleanup*, 2013; p 25

ⁱⁱ R392-600-6(5)(a)

ⁱⁱⁱ R392-600-2(21)

^{iv} R392-600-6(6)