



FORENSIC APPLICATIONS CONSULTING TECHNOLOGIES, INC.

Recently, the issue of Environmental Hazards has been the target of hyperbole and fear mongering, not seen in other societal issues. Indoor moulds, electromagnetic fields, indoor air quality, radon, and similar issues have created an industry populated by practitioners best described as “three-day wonders.”

Traditionally, legitimate assessments to hazardous environments have been performed by highly trained scientists and engineers, such as Industrial Hygienists, Health Physicists, microbiologists, and Registered PE’s.

However, now, without any legitimate knowledge in science, sampling theory, radiation, toxicology, or microbiology, an individual with a fourth grade education can simply call themselves a “Certified Mould Inspector,” or “Environmental Scientist” or “Indoor Air Quality Investigator” or perform radon “testing” or purchase a EMF meter and run around taking EMF “measurements.”

By adopting self-certificates, the practitioners avoid the regulatory licensing and title protection statutes in many States that protect “Engineering” “Medical Practitioner” “Industrial Hygiene” and other legitimate professions.

Such is the case in the assessment of contamination by illegal drug labs.

Poorly trained individuals, operating mostly on myths and popular misconceptions disseminate those myths and misinformation and remain in business primarily by inducing unnecessary fear in homeowners and then coming to the rescue of the frightened homeowner with bogus tests, and usually unnecessary “fixes.”

The web site selected for review occurred by random. However, FACTs has performed a critical review of a “indoor mould report” prepared by the identified author, N. Douglas Ayres, in the past, wherein we formed the opinion the work by Mr. Ayres constituted “junk science.”

In this review of the web site, we see the same kinds of misinformation and myths parading as authoritative facts.

Specifically we have addressed the following myths in the practitioner’s web site:

A methamphetamine laboratory is typically not a large, permanent facility.

In fact, this is entirely untrue. The overwhelming vast majority of methlabs are found in large permanent facilities. Occasionally, however, methlabs are located in boats, campers, cars and other small mobile locations. However, in general, methlabs are “large, permanent facilities.”

The ingredients are common and generally easy to come by...

Depending on the type of methlab under discussion, the ingredients may or may not be common or easy to “come by.” The author of the advertisement is obviously unaware of the wide variety of configurations of methlabs and therefore, is unaware of the complexity associated with the same.

FACTs has been involved in methlabs that were discovered precisely because the ingredients being used were difficult to obtain legally and very uncommon in normal society.

Being in or near a Meth lab is extremely dangerous.

This is mostly hyperbole meant to frighten in the absence of legitimate perspective. The reality is that the human exposures and hazards associated with a methlab covers a spectrum of risk that ranges from insignificant to extremely dangerous. It is for this reason that the services of a legitimate expert in such matters is needed – to place the actual hazards into regulatory perspective and toxicological perspective.

The toxic nature of the ingredients leaves behind hazardous waste...

Perhaps. Sometimes this statement would be true, however, in the overwhelming vast majority of times, this statement would not be true. As a general rule, most methlab sites have been abandoned, and there is virtually no hazardous waste present. The author of the web site lacks the technical competency to understand that “hazardous waste” has a legal definition, and almost always, the material found in most methlabs, upon discovery do not meet the definition of “hazardous waste.” Again this is a problem when “certified mould inspectors” attempt to enter the legitimate environmental assessment discipline – they frequently don’t even know the language of the game.

... six pounds of residue are generated by each pound of Meth manufactured.

This statement is not necessarily true. The residue generated by each pound of “meth” (a vernacular noun that is not capitalized) may be one ounce, 10 ounces, 10 pounds, 26 pounds, 200 pounds, and pretty much any given value and any given unit. The “six pounds of residue are generated by each pound of Meth manufactured” is a myth frequently repeated by poorly trained individuals with no actual experience in methlabs.

It costs an average of \$2,500 to clean up a Meth lab, but costs can run as high as \$10,000.

This is a remarkably misinformed statement. Methlab cleanup will be incumbent on the totality of the circumstances for each site and can range from \$10,000 to well over one million dollars. The author of the web site practices in Colorado wherein a small methlab (such as in a car or a hotel room), may be as little as \$10,000 to bring the property into compliance. However, for a 1,500 square foot single family residence, devoid of personal belongings, the average cost of remediation will be approximately \$25,000. FACTs has been involved in



vehicle restoration that has cost as little as \$11,000 and residential remediations that have exceeded \$125,000.

In Colorado, where the author of the web site is located, it would be entirely impossible to remediate a methlab for \$2,500.

When the ingredients are combined, they can ignite, causing explosions, fires and the release of toxic fumes.

There are two technically incompetent assertions in this statement. The first is that there are NO toxic fumes generated in methlabs. This is a statement that underscores the author's lack of scientific knowledge, lack of knowledge in human exposure assessments and general lack of knowledge in illegal drug labs. A legitimate expert in methlabs, such as an Industrial Hygienist, would understand why there are no toxic fumes generated in methlabs – “Certified Mold Inspectors” and other “instant” environmental consultants lack such specialized knowledge and therefore, make unsupportable statements such as that seen on the web site.

The next problem with the statement is that it is not necessary for the majority (indeed, almost all) of the ingredients to be mixed with anything. Those that are flammable are flammable prior to mixing; those that can cause explosions and fires similarly have those attributes prior to mixing.

Environmental Testing Company conducts meth lab assessments to determine the presence or absence of Methamphetamine (meth) contamination, solely for the owner's information.

It is possible that the authors of the web site, included the final clause of the sentence to honestly relay the important fact, that testing performed by the consultant cannot be used for regulatory compliance or statutory real estate transaction compliance. To our knowledge, “Environmental Testing Company” cannot lawfully test for the presence of methamphetamine contamination in the State of Colorado; the author is apparently unaware of the regulatory difference between testing for methamphetamine contamination, and testing for methamphetamine.

If Meth is determined to be present the State of Colorado requires a full assessment by a Certified Industrial Hygienist.

This statement is simply not true, and underscores the fact that the practitioner is not familiar with Colorado's regulations (which is one of the reasons the practitioner cannot lawfully perform assessments). If the author was familiar with Colorado's regulations, they would have known that the statement was not true.

Additional errors and misinformation occur in the remainder of the language of the web site. However, we have demonstrated the lack of technical competency in methlab testing for this company, based on the information on their web site.

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