

# Meth Contamination in Cars

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We hear a lot about meth contamination in homes, [hotels and motels](#). We hear about people becoming ill from living in contaminated houses. I've received many calls from people who believe they are sick from living in a place contaminated by meth residue. Typical symptoms are respiratory problems, rashes, headaches, irritability, trouble sleeping, fatigue and loss of appetite.

We hear a lot about people being caught making meth in cars. Working meth labs have been blamed for car crashes. [A man in TN](#) was found passed out at a gas pump while making meth in the back seat. [Meth labs have been found in cars](#) all over the country.

People who smoke meth are likely to do so in their cars. Smoking meth leaves a residue that can affect people and pets in buildings. In a place as contained as a car it would seem like residue would deposit in greater quantities. Residue could be present in the ventilation system as well as on seats, head liners and other surfaces. It would likely be present in places where a person may touch after handling meth. We don't hear a lot about cars contaminated with meth that are resold.

After testing found 17 cars on a used car lot in OR were contaminated with meth the [owner said](#): "What's happening here may be typical of what would happen on any car lot, if they came under this kind of scrutiny, which just raises some interesting questions about used cars."

Most home meth manufacturers make small batches of the drug for their own use. It's common to find meth labs in cars. All of these cars are not busted and remediated or destroyed. On top of this there are probably many times the number of cars that have had meth smoked in them.

Cleaning meth contaminated vehicles is difficult and expensive. To clean the toxic chemicals related to a meth lab from a car, it must be stripped to the frame. Meth can destroy a car.

Meth is oil-based and clings to and penetrates surfaces when cooked or smoked in a vehicle. Fumes penetrate and contaminate upholstery, carpets and headliners. To clean a vehicle, it is stripped of its seats, side panels, roof panel and carpet. All porous materials are removed. The interior is scrubbed and hosed down. Then dried.

Everything that has been removed must be replaced with uncontaminated materials. The cost can be \$3-5,000 not including replacement seats, side panels, head liners, carpeting and all other porous parts.

You can test a car before you buy using a simple, inexpensive [residue wipe test](#). Samples are taken by rubbing a special collection paper on various spots inside the car. A reagent is dropped onto the paper for instant results. If the reagent turns blue it is a positive test.



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