



# At a Glance

*Catalyst for Improving the Environment*

## Why We Did This Review

We conducted this review to determine the effectiveness of the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's (EPA's) methamphetamine laboratory, or meth lab, cleanup guidelines, and the status of EPA's required activities under the 2007 Methamphetamine Remediation Research Act (Meth Act).

## Background

Thousands of clandestine meth labs are discovered in the United States each year in houses, hotels, apartments, and vehicles. Chronic exposure to residual meth lab chemicals can cause cancer; damage to the brain, liver, and kidneys; and reproductive problems. The Meth Act requires EPA to develop cleanup guidelines for meth labs; develop a research plan to identify chemicals of concern and possible exposure, and evaluate cleanup techniques; perform a study of residual effects of meth lab chemicals; and convene a technology transfer conference every 3 years.

For further information, contact our Office of Congressional and Public Affairs at (202) 566-2391.

The full report is at:

[www.epa.gov/oig/reports/2011/20110927-11-P-0708.pdf](http://www.epa.gov/oig/reports/2011/20110927-11-P-0708.pdf)

## EPA Progress on the 2007 Methamphetamine Remediation Research Act

### What We Found

EPA has met some, but not all, of its requirements under the Meth Act. While EPA did publish an initial set of guidelines, *Voluntary Guidelines for Methamphetamine Laboratory Cleanup*, in August 2009, it has not yet developed plans to periodically update the guidelines as required. EPA developed a draft multiyear research plan, but has delayed its implementation. EPA also has no plans to convene the technology transfer conference within the required timeframe. Finally, although EPA satisfied the requirement to conduct a study of residual effects by performing a literature review of the health impacts of chemicals remaining in meth labs, it did not transmit the required report to Congress.

According to EPA staff, EPA has not been able to fully implement the Meth Act requirements because EPA's authorized Meth Act funding of \$3.5 million was never appropriated. As a result, EPA's work to meet the Meth Act's requirements has been funded by resources redirected from other programs. From 2008 through January 2011, EPA's estimated total expenditures to address the Meth Act requirements, including personnel and contract costs, were more than \$1.1 million.

EPA has no controls in place to track legislative requirements Agency-wide. EPA relies on its program offices to do so, but these program offices also do not have controls in place to track all legislative requirements.

### What We Recommend

We recommend that EPA determine the Agency's ability to implement the Meth Act requirements and communicate its plan to Congress. We also recommend that EPA update several areas of the voluntary guidelines and develop internal controls to ensure legislative requirements are identified, tracked, and met. EPA agreed with these recommendations. The recommendations are listed as unresolved because planned completion dates were not provided. In its final response to this report, EPA should describe its specific corrective actions to address the recommendations and provide estimated completion dates for these actions.