

ARTICLE: **Landlords warned over drug imports**

Landlords are increasingly becoming innocent parties in the drug trade with rented homes being used as drop-off and pick-up points, according to Customs.

Customs Minister Maurice Williamson said manufacturers of the drug P were using vacant rental properties as distribution points for illegally imported precursor ingredients.

"Previously (landlords) had to worry about their properties being used as P labs, now vacant properties and sublet rooms are being given as the delivery address for pseudoephedrine-based precursors," Mr Williamson said.

He said such offenders preyed on New Zealanders, and landlords needed to do their bit to be vigilant about reporting suspicious activity.

The Customs department was experiencing a huge increase in the amount and number of intercepts.

In the past five to six years border seizures of precursors had increased by 1200 per cent.

Customs manager drug investigations Bill Perry said generally the offenders involved in the organisation of importing rings, and who were doing the renting, were aged between 19 and 30.

"They generally are not working but display obvious signs of wealth.

"We encourage people to look out for anything unusual next door and let us know if they are concerned," Mr Perry said.

Mr Williamson said Customs was seeing more and more instances of repeat-offenders, including some re-offending while on bail for similar crimes.

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Source: NZ Herald.