



Drug Alert Watch

Increasing Abuse of Bath Salts

U . S . D E P A R T M E N T O F J U S T I C E

EWS Report 000007

December 17, 2010

This SENTRY Watch is based on source materials that have not been validated and/or researched by the National Drug Intelligence Center (NDIC). It is intended to serve as an immediate alert to law enforcement and public health officials of potential substance abuse.

Law enforcement officials throughout the country are reporting that products promoted as bath salts have become prevalent as a drug of abuse. Bath salts have recently appeared in some of the same retail outlets that previously sold synthetic cannabinoid products such as K2 and Spice, and also are available via the Internet. Bath salts are abused as recreational drugs typically by injection, smoking, snorting, and, less often, by the use of an atomizer. Effects include agitation, an intense high, euphoria, extreme energy, hallucinations, insomnia, and making abusers easy to anger. Preliminary testing indicates that the active ingredients in many brands contain MDPV (3,4-methylenedioxypyrovalerone) and/or mephedrone.



The abuse of bath salts and similar substances appears to be increasing, especially over the past 12 months. As synthetic cannabinoids are scheduled in various locations, many of their users begin to abuse bath salts. In addition to bath salts, these products are marketed as bath crystals, plant food, and herbal incense. Numerous brands are marketed in all 50 U.S. states and via Internet web sites. Common brand names include Blue Silk, Charge+, Ivory Snow, Ivory Wave, Ocean Burst, Pure Ivory, Purple Wave, Snow Leopard, Stardust (Star Dust), Vanilla Sky, White Dove, White Knight, and White Lightening. In central

Pennsylvania, these substances have been offered for sale under the brand name "Blizzard." The Blizzard brand is described as a white, odorless, fine-grained powder similar in appearance to baby powder or flour (see photo). Many other brands are a tan or brown powdery substance.

These products are readily available at convenience stores, discount tobacco outlets, gas stations, pawnshops, tattoo parlors, and truck stops, among other locations. Packaging typically includes a disclaimer, such as “not for human consumption.” The various brands are sold in 50-milligram to 500-milligram packets. Prices range from \$25 to \$50 per 50-milligram packet. These products have been widely available in the United Kingdom for at least several years. This year, a number of overdoses have been reported in the United Kingdom, including some deaths. A ban of bath salt products that contain MDPV went into effect in the United Kingdom on April 16, 2010.

Nationwide, male and female abusers of these substances range from teenagers to those in their 40s, often with an extensive history of drug abuse. Some abusers describe the effects as similar to methamphetamine, ecstasy, and cocaine, and one referred to the substances as “complete crank” while others used the term “fake cocaine.”

The genesis of this watch was originally posed as a SENTRY ListServ question on December 7, 2010.

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Photo Credit: WJAC-TV

POC: SENTRY Management Team, www.justice.gov/ndic/sentry or (814) 532-5888

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