

12-06 - An Emerging New Drug: "Bath Salts"

Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department

NEWSLETTER

Field Operations Support Services, (323) 890-5411



An Emerging New Drug: "Bath Salts"

A new substance sold as "bath salts" appears as a fine white or light brown powdered substance resembling cocaine or methamphetamine. "Bath salts" are commonly labeled as Vanilla Sky, Ivory Wave, Ocean Burst, and Purple Wave. The label may appear as a safe, relaxing fragrance added to a bath, but that's deceiving. "Bath Salts" are intended to mimic the effects of illegal drugs like cocaine, methamphetamine, and MDMA (ecstasy). "Bath salts" were widely available, sold in stores locally, and were virtually unregulated online until recently.

Preliminary information indicated the three most common active ingredients are MDPV, CFT, and Mephedrone. These substances originated as research drugs and have been exploited because they were not considered illegal. They have been sold at local "head shops" and online through websites such as eBay. "Bath salts" are usually snorted but can also be smoked and swallowed. The most common effects are mental and sexual stimulation, increased energy, rapid heart rate, insomnia, and the intense desire to re-dose. Effects can last from 6-8 hours, but with re-dosing, they can cause insomnia and last for several days.

There are no long-term studies on the use of "bath salts"; however, reports indicate it is potentially addictive and causes adverse effects on the heart, circulation, and nervous systems. There is no known blood or urine test for "bath salts" which makes it a popular choice for abuse by those who are regulated by random drug screening tests.

Symptoms/Side Effects of "bath salts" include:

- Prolonged agitation (lasting up to 5 days and may require physical restraint)
- Difficulty breathing
- Hallucinations, acute paranoid psychosis, diminished cognitive ability

- Blood pressure and heart rate elevated to dangerous levels
- Muscular pain and spasms
- Dilated pupils
- Loss of bowel control
- Intense high followed by a painful hangover
- Kidney failure
- Sore jaw

Currently it is not a crime to be in possession of "bath salts." It is illegal to manufacture, transport, sell or offer "bath salts" for sale under the "Synthetic Drug Abuse Prevention Act" of 2012. Legislation is ongoing to prohibit the possession of "bath salts" and to be under the influence of "bath salts."

Current health and safety codes should be reviewed before taking law enforcement action against a person in possession or under the influence of "bath salts."

When dealing with a person possibly under the influence of "bath salts," law enforcement personnel should consider the following options:

647(f) P.C. - Under the influence of "any drug" and unable to care for self.

647(g) P.C. - When a person is 647(f), a Peace Officer may take person under 5150 W.I.C.

5150 W.I.C. – Provides Peace Officers the authority to detain a person for a 72-hour evaluation and treatment for "danger to self" in a case where a person purposely ingests "bath salts" in the form of self-poisoning and also in cases where the person would be so intoxicated that he/she presents a danger to others through hostile behavior.

Questions regarding the contents of this newsletter may be directed to Field Operations Support Services.
