

Seminole County law enforcement advising businesses about new synthetic drug ban - 12/11/2012

Law enforcement agencies in Seminole County will immediately begin visiting more than 350 local retailers to advise store owners and managers about the ban on synthetic substances issued earlier today by Attorney General Pam Bondi. The Attorney General's order adds 22 chemicals to the schedule of substances controlled under Florida law.

The synthetic drugs are marketed, often with deceptive packaging, under a variety of different names and brands and are commonly known as "bath salts," and "K2" or "Spice." The drugs are frequently labeled as being "all natural" or "a safe alternative," but can be powerful stimulants that can cause psychotic episodes, hallucinations, seizures, paranoia, tremors, and other serious medical reactions. The products are believed to be produced as substitutes for marijuana, ecstasy, cocaine and amphetamines. They are typically sold at convenience, liquor, and tobacco stores.

Law enforcement officers will contact stores selling the products to ensure they are aware of the order and request voluntary compliance. Stores carrying the products will be asked to remove their inventory, and may turn it over to law enforcement for safe and proper disposal. Today's visits are informational and educational, and no arrests will be made for possession of the product. Deputies from the Seminole County Sheriff's Office and officers from the Altamonte Springs, Casselberry, Lake Mary, Longwood, Oviedo, Sanford, and Winter Springs Police Departments will conduct the visits.

Each location will be visited by law enforcement officers again in the near future to ensure compliance. Any locations still selling the product at that time will face enforcement action and possible criminal charges.

Members of the community who have the synthetic drugs in their possession may turn in the products, no questions asked, at drug drop off boxes located at each local law enforcement agency. A list of locations can be found at www.seminolepreventioncoalition.org (go to the "Pitch your Pills" tab).

In 2011 and 2012, the Florida Legislature banned a number of chemicals found in synthetic drugs, yet manufacturers continue to produce and distribute dangerous, alternative compounds. More information can be found on the Attorney General's website at: www.myfloridalegal.com