



Situational Awareness: Marijuana Candy



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(U//FOUO) NJ ROIC Fusion Liaison & Intelligence Training Unit ~ ROIC201404-01280F

(U//FOUO) Marijuana candy is being seized with greater frequency in New Jersey and in other states. It is dangerous because of its potency, and poses a particular risk to children because it is often disguised as hard or gummy candy or chocolate.

(U//FOUO) As with other emerging drug trends originating on the West Coast, marijuana candy has made its way east to New Jersey. The growing marijuana manufacturing industries in Washington and Colorado are seizing the opportunities afforded by marijuana legalization in those states. There are companies marketing THC laced candy and fruit on the internet as medical marijuana.¹ Additionally, dealers in states, where recreational marijuana is not legal, are manufacturing it themselves.



PRODUCTION OF MARIJUANA CANDY

(U//FOUO) Marijuana candy is made with highly concentrated marijuana oil or extract. The hard candies are made like any other candy using corn syrup, water, sugar, coloring and flavoring. Marijuana oil or extract containing concentrated THC is added to the mixture. The oil is made by grinding marijuana into a fine powder, heating it in vegetable oil, and passing it through cheesecloth or other types of filters to remove any solids.² Recipes are available on the internet.

(U//FOUO) The process to make marijuana chocolate is similar. The homemade candy is made by mixing marijuana oil with melted chocolate. Large scale medical marijuana production is taking place in Canada, where chocolate plants are licensed to manufacture marijuana chocolate. Smaller scale production occurs in the United States in jurisdictions where medical marijuana is legal. In Colorado, where recreational marijuana is legal, some companies sell products with different concentrations of THC depending on whether it is for medical or recreational use. The actual amount of THC in the edible products has been reported to vary widely.³

¹ Pot plans for Vashon's vacant K2 building divide 'Weed Island', The Seattle Times, March 12, 2014, http://seattletimes.com/html/localnews/2023115966_vashonpotxml.html

² The Candy Man can...get you high, Times Union, March 6, 2012, <http://www.timesunion.com/local/article/The-candy-man-can-get-you-high-3386395.php#photo-2587385>

³ Edibles' THC claims versus lab results surprising, The Denver Post, March 9, 2014, <http://www.thecannabist.co/2014/03/09/tests-show-thc-content-marijuana-edibles-inconsistent/6421/>

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DETECTION OF MARIJUANA CANDY

(U//FOUO) Even though the marijuana candy may not appear suspicious, it still gives off a distinct marijuana odor when the packaging is opened. Drug sniffing dogs will also be able to confirm the presence of marijuana contained in candy.⁴ It may be branded and wrapped in commercial packaging, which closely resembles other known popular brands. (Photo at right)⁵. It may also be wrapped in bags or wrappers appearing to be homemade.

**SEIZURES IN NEW JERSEY**

(U//FOUO)

- In March 2014, Ocean Township (Monmouth County), Police seized 18 marijuana chocolate bars confirmed to contain marijuana. Also seized were 3 items described as marijuana wax.
- In December 2013, Wall Township Police seized 10 boxes of marijuana chocolate bars confirmed to contain marijuana.
- In June 2013, Long Branch Police seized 40 red candy-like cubes, similar in appearance to Jolly Ranchers, confirmed to contain marijuana.
- In February 2013, Edison Township Police seized 3 “Dank Grasshopper” chocolate bars suspected to contain hashish and/or marijuana. These bars are sold by Grateful Meds in Los Angeles, California.

SEIZURES IN NEIGHBORING STATES

Pennsylvania

(U//FOUO) In October, 2013, West Chester University Police seized over 40 pounds of THC-laced candy from an apartment at the university. The candy was in various shapes, sizes and, colors. (Photo at right). Considering the time of year of the seizure, police were concerned that the candy could wind up in Halloween bags.⁶



New York

(U//FOUO) In March of 2012 on the New York Thruway south of Albany, a father from Massachusetts and his daughter from Queens, New York, allegedly drove around the Northeast selling marijuana candies at “jamband” concerts getting upwards of \$10 a piece for each candy. When they were stopped, they allegedly had 40 pounds of cherry, orange, root beer, sour apple, coffee, butter rum, guava, and pomegranate flavored marijuana candy along with a pound of marijuana. The two were charged with a felony count of criminal possession of a controlled substance.⁷

OFFICER SAFETY

(U//FOUO) Officers are strongly encouraged to:

⁴ *Ibid*

⁵ *Drug Ring Sold Pot-Laced Candy, Soda*, The Smoking Gun, March 17, 2006, <http://www.thesmokinggun.com/documents/crime/drug-ring-sold-pot-laced-candy-soda>

⁶ *Drug-Laced Candy Bust at Local College*, NBC 10 Philadelphia, October 29, 2013, <http://www.nbcphiladelphia.com/news/local/Weed-Candy-Bust-229562731.html>

⁷ *The Candy Man can...get you high*, Times Union, March 6, 2012, <http://www.timesunion.com/local/article/The-candy-man-can-get-you-high-3386395.php#photo-2587385>

- Wear patrol gloves any time a search is conducted
- Wear vinyl or non-latex gloves when handling marijuana and throw them away after use
- Thoroughly wash hands after removing gloves and before eating, drinking, or smoking to prevent potential ingestion of drug particles
- Test suspected marijuana in a well-ventilated area and use a mask, if possible
- Call the local fire department and remain outside if marijuana manufacturing is suspected

(U//FOUO) Through the DMI, the State Police Regional Crime Labs will facilitate expedited forensic analysis to assist investigators and health care professionals during emergent situations. Any law enforcement agency requiring expedited analysis of suspected drug specimens involved in overdoses should contact the NJ ROIC Fusion Liaison & Intelligence Unit at: ROICOutreach@gw.njsp.org, by fax to 609-530-4174 or by calling 609-963-6900 ext. 6273 or 2044.