Bath Salts: Deadly New Designer Drug

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Marketed with harmless-sounding names such as Ivory Wave, Tranquility, and Blue Silk (among others), bath salts have become the newest trendy street drug. Comparable to methamphetamine, cocaine, and PCP, snorting bath salts can induce violent and aggressive behavior, which make users very dangerous to themselves and law enforcement.

Authorities are caught in a rush to combat this dangerous trend, as bath salts are legal in most states.

Bath salts are essentially drugs that are being labeled “bath salts.” Although they are marketed “not for human consumption,” they are being purchased with the intent to be snorted, injected, or smoked by abusers, sometimes causing extreme reactions such as hallucinations, paranoia, suicidal thoughts, agitation, and increased heart rate. Users have also experienced hypothermia, seizures, and delusions. None of the chemicals found in these salts are contained in legitimate bath salts sold by a reputable company.

Note: For the purpose of this report, the use of the term bath salts refers to the product that abusers are using to get a drug-like high. It does not refer to the legitimate bath salts that a bather would use.
Real Bath Salts vs. Drug-like Bath Salts
There is no evidence to suggest that the “bath salts” which induce drug-like behavior contain the chemicals sodium chloride (sea salt) and magnesium sulfate (Epsom salt), which are usually the staple ingredients of true bath salts. According to San Francisco Bath Salt Company, which specializes and sells legitimate bath salts, the creators of the drug-like bath salts simply labeled the products bath salts to manipulate the system.

Bath salts are believed to be a mix of synthetic cocaine and a form of Ecstasy. Its main component, MDPV (3,4-Methylenedioxypyrovalerone), is a synthetic product of the drug pyrovalerone, a Schedule V psychoactive drug. It is a stimulant usually sold in salt form with the appearance of powder, white to tan/brown in color with a slight odor. Bath salts also come in pill form.

In the past, MDPV was sold strictly online and manufactured in China or India. Now it is being sold on the streets and from small retailers as a bath salt product.

Bath salts are generally sold in a 500mg package, which, Major Tommy Ford of Bay County, Miss. Sheriff’s Office stated, adds to the problem since people assume 500mg is a normal hit and they overdose. In fact, 10mg or less would be considered a normal hit. This unintentional overdose causes the severe hallucinations of bath salt users, which are being reported in the media.

The drug is sold at head shops, truck stops, adult stores, and online (Ebay) for $20 to $60. Outlets include the same type of stores that sold synthetic marijuana products, such as K2 incense.

“It is popular among teenagers, and it is an expensive habit,” stated Det. Wes Rowe of Wythe County, W.Va. Sheriff’s Office. “It is almost cheaper to just go buy the real stuff [methamphetamine].”

Besides MDPV, bath salts include the chemicals methylone, mephedrone, methoxymethcathinone, and fluromethcathinone. The high from the drugs has been reported to last as long as three to six days. However, users reported side-effects from the salts, even after no longer consuming it.

MDPV and Mephedrone
MDPV (also known as methylenedioxypyrovalerone) is a psychoactive drug with stimulant properties. It has been sold since 2008 as a research chemical. In 2010, it began being sold as a legal drug alternative in the United States, marketed as bath salts in gas stations and convenience stores with similar marketing as Spice and K2 incense. It is sometimes called PV or PeeVee.

Mephedrone (also known as 4-methylmethcathinone or 4-MMC) is a synthetic stimulant manufactured in China and is similar to the cathinone compounds found in the khat plant of eastern Africa. This is why bath salts are also referred to as plant food. Users can swallow, snort, or inject the chemical to produce similar effects to MDMA, amphetamines, and cocaine. It became available for sale on the Internet in 2007. In the U.K., it was sold in a product called bubbles (similar to bath salts). Street names include meow meow, Miaow, and M-Cat.
Officer Safety
Training should include “what if” situations. It is beneficial for officers to develop their own “what if” scenarios that are particular to their own patrol areas. Partners should develop and rehearse scenarios that involve their actions as partners, as well as their actions if the situation requires that they act alone.

Sheriff Frank McKeithen of Bay County, Fla. began training his deputies to recognize the symptoms of bath salts abuse. He instructed them to treat the situation as a medical emergency and wait for EMTs and backup deputies to arrive, if at all possible, and create a coordinated plan for subduing the subject.

While under the influence of drugs, subjects will unintentionally violate the law and deputies have to do their best to protect the person. Sheriff McKeithen stated that tasers and pepper spray should be used only as a last resort. Before the emergency order made the chemicals illegal in Florida, law enforcement charged offenders with disorderly conduct, a misdemeanor.

Law enforcement should be familiar with the types of bath salts sold in their jurisdictions, and the effects that the drugs produce (the effects of an overdose and a common high).

People on Bath Salts are Violent, Unpredictable
It took 11 Florida law enforcement officers to control a man high on bath salts; the suspect tore the radar unit out of a vehicle with his teeth.

A Tippah County Sheriff’s Deputy was shot and killed while responding to a disturbance call near Ripley, Miss. Authorities are now investigating whether the suspect, now being held on capital murder charges, was high on bath salts.

An Itawamba County, Miss. Deputy was injured while trying to arrest a suspect under the influence of bath salts. The man fought off the deputies because he thought they were devils coming to take him.

It took six deputies and multiple EMTs to sedate a man for safe transport to Bay Medical Center in Bay County, Fla. after he snorted two packages of bath salts. Bath salts have resulted in several uses of the Florida Baker Act, which allows for involuntary examination of an individual when the individual is in a psychotic state.

In Panama City, Fla., a 71-year-old woman was attacked by her 48-year-old daughter high on bath salts and swinging a machete in an attempt to behead her. The daughter was arrested and charged with aggravated assault with a deadly weapon.

In Wythe County, W.Va., an adult entertainment store was burglarized. The suspects targeted the $40 packages of Tranquility bath salts sold at the store.

In Fulton, Miss., a man got high on bath salts and cut his face and stomach repeatedly with a skinning knife. The man reported to his local newspaper that he had tried every drug from heroin to crack and was terrified by the effects produced by bath salts.

A physician working in Covington, La. watched his son cut his throat after enduring a delirium onset by snorting, smoking, or injecting bath salts. His son survived, only to shoot himself later when he had visions of army soldiers swarming his house.
Effects of Bath Salts

The effects, a euphoric high with a rush if injected, are similar to cocaine, Ecstasy, or methamphetamine. It acts as an appetite suppressant while giving the user more energy. For these reasons, some high school and college students are now using bath salts because they believe it is beneficial for use at work or studying.

Side effects include muscle tension in the face that usually ends up with jaw and tongue rolling and teeth grinding, dilated pupils, muscle twitches, anxiousness and panic attacks, or a violent rage.

Some teenagers treat bath salts like speed and re-dose too soon in order to get the initial rush. Instead, they find themselves suffering extreme side effects because of the overdose. Other symptoms include hot flashes, mild fever, dysphoria, and lack of body heat, which in some cases could lead to hypothermia.

A single dose can last five hours with the peak occurring an hour after taking it. Redosing can extend these effects for days. However, the more the user re-doses, the more difficult the recovery period and the more negative side effects. MDPV is very addictive, and although the trip can be very harsh, the user continues to crave for more.

Law Enforcement Initiatives to Illegalize Bath Salts

Bath salts are not regulated by the U.S. Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA) and may take years to be prohibited at the federal level. It appears that the states will need to take action to stop the legal sale of the drug. Many lawmakers are now considering banning these types of bath salts in several states.

Recently, six chemicals found in bath salts (particularly mephedrone and MDPV) were placed on Louisiana’s and Florida’s controlled substances list, making it illegal in those states to sell or manufacture products with these chemicals.

In Louisiana, the chemicals were outlawed by an emergency order after the state’s poison center received more than 165 calls in the last three months of 2010 involving exposure to the chemicals. Director Mark Ryan of Louisiana’s poison control center reported a lower number of calls regarding bath salts since Louisiana banned their sale. Violators of the new order could face up to 30 years imprisonment.

Subsequently, law enforcement sent letters to store owners alerting them that bath salts were now illegal. Officers also went store-to-store with copies of the order. The Louisiana State Fusion Center has recommended the products be treated as Schedule I narcotics, and each agency follow their normal procedures for Schedule I narcotics disposal.

Louisiana Governor Bobby Jindal stated that placing the chemicals on Louisiana’s controlled substances list “gives our law enforcement officials the tools they need to crack...
Regional Organized Crime Information Center
Special Research Report • Bath Salts: Deadly New Designer Drug

Common Brand Names

| Ivory Wave | Route 69 | Purple Wave |
| Red Dove  | Ivory    | Ocean Burst |
| Vanilla Sky| Bubbles | Crush |
| Bliss      | Bubble Love| Lunar Wave |
| White Lightning| Bounce | Zoom |
| Hurricane Charlie| Plant Food | Bloom |
| Cloud 9   | Shake n Vac | Dusted |
| Ocean      | Mad Cow | Mint Mania |
| Charge + (plus) | Drone | Mitseez |
| Scarface   | Snow Leopard | RAZ |
| White Dove | Ocean Snow | Recharge |
| White Rush | Pure Ivory | Special Gold |
| Blue Silk  | Whack | Bath Bombs |
| Blue Diamond | Sextacy | Escobars |
| Mojo Diamond | Bloom | Zambia |
| Tranquility | Purple Rain | Euphoria |
| Bolivian Bath | Fly | |

Florida retailers and those in possession of bath salts who required assistance in their lawful disposal were asked to contact their local law enforcement agencies for assistance.

On Jan. 26, 2011, Florida banned the sale and possession of MDVP, specifically in the bath salts that go by the names Route 69, White Rush, Bolivian Bath, Vanilla Sky, and others. Attorney General Pam Bondi issued an emergency order, making the sale or possession of these salts illegal. The Florida Department of Law Enforcement has begun notifying smoke shops of the new rule. The order will last 90 days, giving lawmakers time to criminalize the bath salts by April.

Previously, Sheriff McKeithen of Bay Co., Fla. urged retailers to stop selling bath salts in a letter: “From our own personal contact with individuals who have ingested this substance, as well as information provided by local medical personnel, this substance being distributed by your business has a very high potential for abuse, resulting in physical and mental dangers as well as possibly being lethal.”

During a forum hosted by Sheriff McKeithen, he stated he was concerned that college-age students coming to Panama City for Spring Break would turn to bath salts for a good time. He stated, “It’s almost like the perfect storm I worry about.”

In February 2011, Mississippi, West Virginia, Kentucky, and North Carolina passed bills through their state legislature to outlaw the chemicals mephedrone and MDPV found in bath salts pending approval by their governors.

In addition, a bill was introduced in the state legislature in Oklahoma to ban bath salts. The Oklahoma Bureau of Narcotics and Dangerous Drugs Control stated that it is trying to head off any problems by encouraging the ban of the chemicals mephedrone, methylone, and MDPV.

The use of bath salts has not gained popularity within the Houston, Texas HIDTA. However, with the ban in place in Louisiana an increase in bath salt abuse is expected in the areas where it is still legal.
WARNING

The Louisiana Department of Health and Hospitals has added the following chemicals to the Controlled Dangerous Substance Act as Schedule I drugs:

- 3,4-Methylenedioxymethcathinone (Methylone);
- 3,4-Methylenedioxyxpyrovalerone (MDPV);
- 4-Methylmethcathinone (Mephedrone);
- 4-Methoxymethcathinone;
- 4-Fluoromethcathinone; and
- 3-Fluoromethcathinone.

It is now illegal to possess, distribute or manufacture products with these chemicals. Violators could face up to 30 years imprisonment.

These chemicals are commonly found in products being marketed as “bath salts” and “plant food” by the brand names Ivory Wave, Ocean, Charge +, White Lightening, Scarface, Hurricane Charlie, Red Dove, Cloud-9 and White Dove.

Individuals and retailers with these products should contact their local law enforcement to find out how to safely dispose of these drugs.

If you or your loved one faces a drug addiction, contact the Louisiana Department of Health and Hospitals Alcohol/Drug Helpline at 1-877-664-2248.

For additional information, or to report someone who has been exposed to these chemicals, contact the Louisiana Poison Center at 1-800-222-1222.
On January 26, 2011, Florida Attorney General Pam Bondi deemed “bath salts” containing psychoactive substances to be a significant threat to health and public safety within the State of Florida. By delegation of authority granted under 893.035(7)(a), F.S., Attorney General Bondi added these compounds to Florida's list of controlled substances as Schedule I drugs which makes the purchase, possession, sale, and/or distribution a felony.

The following is a sample of designer “bath salt” products:

- Ivory Wave
- Vanilla Sky
- Pure Ivory
- White Rush
- Purple Wave
- Blue Silk
- Purple Rain
- Route 69

“Bath salt” products are known to produce certain side effects, some of which are quite severe. The following is the list of side effects associated with consumption of “bath salts” as reported by medical personnel:

- Muscle damage
- Hallucinations
- Blood circulation problems, including increased blood pressure & sharp increase in body temperature
- Aggression
- Kidney failure
- Seizures
- Severe paranoia
- Pancreatitis
- Panic attacks

In some extreme cases, powdered “bath salt” products have been linked to self-mutilation and drug induced deaths to include an increased risk of suicide.

Retailers and those in possession of psychoactive “bath salts” who require assistance in their lawful disposal are asked to contact their local law enforcement agencies for assistance. Failure to comply with this emergency order can result in a felony arrest as punishable under 775.082, F.S.

The law enforcement community, as well as health care providers, can confirm the presence of the following chemicals contained within “bath salts” which will produce the above psychoactive effects:

- 3,4 - Methylenedioxymethcathinone (Methylone)
- 3,4 - Methylenedioxyxpyrovalerone (MDPV)
- 4 - Methylmethcathinone (Mephedrone)
- 3 - Methoxymethcathinone
- 3 - Fluoromethcathinone
- 4 - Fluoromethcathinone

If you would like more information about this brief, or if you have information that you would like to submit regarding “bath salts”, please contact the Florida Department of Law Enforcement at (850) 410-7645.
FDLE memo to law enforcement on presumptive tests to identify bath salts

FDLE memo to law enforcement on presumptive tests to identify bath salts

Attorney General Pam Bondi joined FDLE Commissioner Gerald Bailey and Bay County Sheriff Frank McKeithen and other law enforcement officials, as well as legislative leaders, to announce the filing of an emergency rule that will add substances containing MDPV (Methylenedioxypyrovalerone), commonly known as “bath salts” to the schedule of controlled substances.

“Due to the violent nature of the side effects involved in taking these drugs, the emergency rule will provide law enforcement with the tools necessary to take this dangerous substance off the shelves and protect the abusers from themselves as well as others,” said Attorney General Bondi. “These are dangerous drugs that should not be confused with any type of common bath product.”

Common street names for this drug include: Vanilla Sky, Ivory Wave, Ocean Burst and Bolivian Bath. The substance is usually snorted although it can be smoked or swallowed. Reported side effects of MDPV include: increased heart rate, nosebleeds, hallucinations, severe paranoia, seizures, and kidney failure.

“This rule will stop availability and stop access to these highly potent substances. Florida law enforcement appreciates the quick action taken to halt the use of these products before they become even more prevalent in our communities,” said Commissioner Bailey.

A copy of the rule can be obtained on the FDLE Web site.

Bath Salt Distribution Center

Because of the high number of calls, Louisiana has asked the federal DEA to investigate whether their state is a national distribution center for the drugs.

However, in an online forum for law enforcement, officers have listed Memphis, Tenn. as the epicenter of bath salt distribution. In addition, youths age 18-21 are reporting to open-reporting news sources that with the crackdown in Louisiana, bath salt users are heading north to Memphis.

The official report of Florida Attorney General Pam Bondi (which outlawed bath salts for 90 days through an emergency order) reported that an Internet search on popular buy/sale Web sites revealed New York, Utah, and Alaska as additional distributors within the United States.
Who uses Bath Salts?
Most states list teenagers as the main users of bath salts. The Florida Poison Control Center reported that the majority of the calls concerning bath salts were being placed by individuals 16 to 20 years of age.

In addition, according to Sheriff Chris Dickinson of Itawamba County, Miss., meth addicts are also primary consumers of bath salts and can be very dangerous when high on the drugs. Sheriff Dickinson reported 30 encounters with bath salt users within two months. The bath salt problem grew in Itawamba County after a Mississippi law began restricting the sale of pseudoephedrine, a key ingredient in making methamphetamine.

At least 25 states have received calls about exposure, but it seems to be most popular in the South. Since the end of September 2010, the Louisiana Poison Control Center has received 165 calls from people in crisis after using bath salts, representing 57 percent of the calls recorded nationwide. In addition, 85 percent of those calls were from emergency room physicians or first responders. Florida followed with 38 calls and Kentucky with 23. Next in line were Mississippi, Missouri, Tennessee, Texas, and Utah.

U.S. poison centers in 25 states received 117 calls regarding bath salts during the first two weeks of 2011. Louisiana accounted for 48 percent of the calls.

Why are Bath Salts Legal?
Bath salts are part of a new fad of designer drugs, a term used to describe drugs that are created (or marketed) to avoid existing drug laws. The molecular structures of existing drugs are modified, or drugs with entirely different chemical structures are found that produce similar effects to illegal drugs.

Historically (dating from the 1920s) designer drugs have been opioids or hallucinogens. In fact, some designer drugs are already illegalized under the Controlled Substances Act, including MDMA (Ecstasy) and two relatives, as well as 11 versions of synthetic heroin.

Starting in 2005, the term has expanded to include stimulants such as geranamine, mephedrone, MDPV, desoxypipradol, methylmethaqualone, and others.

For example, MDPV is the designer drug of Pyrovalene. The chemical structure for Pyrovalene (the known drug or parent drug) was altered and produced MDPV (the designer drug also known as analogues or children) which has similar effects to Pyrovalene but is legal.

Due to the recent development of many of these designer drugs, laws banning or regulating their use have not been developed yet. In fact, some designer drugs only appear after a legislative action, in order to replace the similar compound that was banned.

State laws banning items such as bath salts are difficult to enforce. For instance, within days of banning fake pot in summer 2010, slightly altered products were on the market, which were made from different chemicals to avoid the law.

An herbal shop owner in Florida stated that the number of different plants that can be blended together to reach mood-changing and relaxing effects is almost endless. The herbal blends they sell are synthetic cannabinoids, which means the chemistry has been altered to control the effects, thus making them legal for sale and consumption.
For more information, check out our online interactive report found on the ROCIC Publications Web page.

Sources of Information

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© 2011 ROCIC • This publication was supported by Grant No. 2008-RS-CX-K005, awarded by the Bureau of Justice Assistance, Office of Justice Programs, U.S. Department of Justice. The Office of Justice Programs also coordinates the activities of the Bureau of Justice Statistics, the National Institute of Justice, the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency, and the Office for Victims of Crime. This document was prepared under the leadership, guidance and funding of the Bureau of Justice Assistance (BJA), Office of Justice Programs, U.S. Department of Justice in collaboration with the Regional Organized Crime Information Center (ROVIC). The opinions, findings, and conclusions or recommendations expressed in this document are those of the authors and do not necessarily represent the official position or policies of the U.S. Department of Justice. Regional Organized Crime Information Center and ROCIC are protected by copyright laws.