

# Wisconsin Crime Prevention Practitioners Association

## Emerging Drug Threats

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## Synthetic Cannabinoids

Back in 2009 law enforcement started to see an influx of what was originally called 'legal weed' and was sold in convenience stores, smoke shops, adult themed stores and the internet. Initially this product was legal until March 1, 2011, when the DEA implemented an emergency order banning the sale and possession of this product until further research can be done and ultimately banned the products.

### What are synthetic cannabinoids

Synthetic cannabinoids refer to a growing number of man-made mind-altering chemicals that are either sprayed on dried, shredded plant material so they can be smoked (herbal incense) or sold as liquids to be vaporized and inhaled in e-cigarettes and other devices (liquid incense).

These chemicals are called *cannabinoids* because they are related to chemicals found in the marijuana plant. Because of this similarity, synthetic cannabinoids are sometimes misleadingly called "synthetic marijuana" or "fake weed", and they are often marketed as "safe," legal alternatives to that drug. In fact, they may affect the brain much more powerfully than marijuana; their actual effects can be unpredictable and, in some cases, severe or even life-threatening.

### How is it used

Manufacturers sell these herbal incense products in colorful foil packages and sell similar liquid incense products, like other e-cigarette fluids, in plastic bottles. They market these products under a wide variety of specific brand names; in past years, K2 and Spice were common. Hundreds of other brand names now exist, such as Crazy Monkey; Purple Dragon; and Compton Crush.

### Signs of use

Some of the signs are similar to that of marijuana however many times they include worse effects such as: extreme anxiety; confusion; paranoia (extreme and unreasonable distrust of others) and hallucinations.

### What are the dangers

The dangers with the product come from the assumption that this is similar to marijuana, which couldn't be further from the truth! Manufactures of these drugs will often introduce unknown chemicals creating very potent mixtures which often lead to clusters of overdoses.



