



**U. S. Department of Justice**

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Synthetic designer drugs, commonly referred to by misleading names such as “bath salts,” “plant food,” and “carpet cleaner,” are a serious public safety and health concern across the Roanoke Valley. These synthetic drugs contain mixtures of many different chemicals, including those that resemble cocaine, methamphetamine, and MDMA or “ecstasy.” Ingestion of these substances can cause severe and unanticipated physical reactions such as nausea, heart failure, and stroke, as well as psychotic reactions including paranoia, delusions, suicidal ideation, and violent outbursts.

It has come to the attention of law enforcement that some places of business in the Roanoke Valley may be selling these substances. They are often packaged with a variety of brand names such as “Ivory Wave,” “Purple Wave,” “Vanilla Sky,” “Amped” and “Bliss.”

**Business owners may mistakenly believe the sale of these synthetic substances is legal.** In fact, federal law makes the distribution of “analogue” substances marketed for human consumption illegal if those substances are chemically similar to a scheduled illegal drug and have the same pharmacological effect on a user. The Drug Enforcement Administration and our office are investigating and prosecuting those who sell these synthetic substances, using the “analogue” statute and other federal laws. This office recently secured the convictions of individuals from Charlottesville and Augusta County, including a business owner, for conspiring to distribute these synthetic drugs.

Business owners should be aware that significant resources are being devoted to the investigation and prosecution of individuals and businesses involved in the distribution of synthetic drugs. If convicted, the personal and business related assets of those involved in the distribution of synthetic drugs may be forfeited to the government.

Local law enforcement is prepared to help business owners dispose of these substances should they choose to cease and desist in their commercial distribution. Should a business owner decide to continue selling synthetic drugs, be advised law enforcement will use all remedies available under federal law to prevent the distribution of these dangerous substances.

Sincerely,  
TIMOTHY J. HEAPHY  
United States Attorney