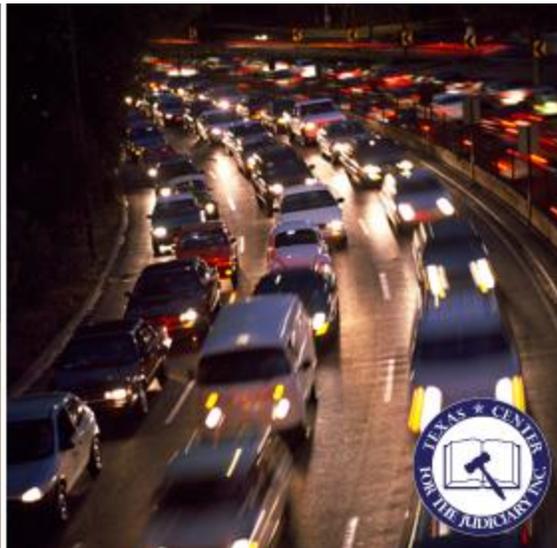


THE DWI NEWSLETTER

brought to you by

THE TEXAS CENTER FOR
THE JUDICIARY *and*
THE TEXAS DEPARTMENT
OF TRANSPORTATION



Summer 2010 Newsletter

Table of Contents

- [Driving While Impaired = Driving While Medicated](#)
- [Chemically Altered THC is Available at Your Local Head Shop](#)

DRIVING WHILE IMPAIRED = DRIVING WHILE MEDICATED

Anecdotally, we know that we are seeing more impaired driving cases where defendants have used illicit drugs or prescription drugs alone, or in addition to alcohol. This article discusses the same trend in Arizona and explores the unique challenges these cases present to law enforcement and prosecution.

Arizona Sees Surge in DUIs Tied to Medicine

(The Arizona Republic)

Apr. 8, 2010 12:00 AM

The driver was wearing his tennis shoes on the wrong feet, and he could lift his arms only halfway to his chocolate-covered face when officers stopped him at a Tucson fast-food restaurant.

He seemed impaired. Yet there was no alcohol in the 44-year-old's system.

It would take a toxicology test to learn that a cocktail of five different drugs was coursing through the driver, who was later charged with DUI.

Cases like that, experts say, have become commonplace. Legally prescribed drugs are more accessible. And when they are mixed and mingled - occasionally for legitimate therapeutic purposes but more often because of abuse or ignorance - they often land people behind bars.

In the Tucson case, the stop for erratic driving eventually revealed that the motorist was under the influence of anti-anxiety drugs and anti-depressants.

Careless use of prescription drugs, better police training to recognize impairment and cutting-edge equipment that detects even traces in blood samples are responsible for a soaring number of drug-related arrests for driving under the influence, authorities say.

The number of drug-related DUI cases handled by the Arizona Department of Public Safety rose from about 4,400 in 1999 to more than 14,700 last year, an increase of more than 230 percent. The state's population in that period rose about 38 percent.

[Back To Top](#)

CHEMICALLY ALTERED THC IS AVAILABLE AT YOUR LOCAL HEAD SHOP

At least four different strains of chemically altered THC are being marketed in Texas as “herbal incense” at local head shops and some convenience stores. In addition, there are approximately 100 such products available on the internet. Most of these products are manufactured in China or other parts of the Far East by drying different herb and plant leaves and spraying or infusing them with THC that has been chemically altered to be one molecule different than the THC labeled as illegal, and thus not detectable in urine tests. Research shows that the high from smoking these “herbal incense” products is almost identical to that of marijuana. To read more about this exploding market and why it has already been banned in Europe, read this article:

[K2, Spice Gold, and Herbal 'Incense'](#)

[Legal Herbal Products Laced With Designer Drugs: Not Your Father's Marijuana](#)

By Daniel J. DeNoon

WebMD Health News

Reviewed by Louise Chang, MD

March 5, 2010 - K2, Spice Gold, and dozens of other currently legal "herbal incense" products are spiked with powerful designer drugs -- and they don't show up in drug tests.

As early as 2004, this type of product began appearing for sale on the Internet and in head shops in Europe. By 2008, sales throughout Europe soared; U.S. and Canada sales took off in 2009.

"I believe it is everywhere in the United States," Marilyn Huestis, PhD, chief of chemistry and drug metabolism at the National Institute for Drug Abuse, tells WebMD.

Package labels feature psychedelic art and claim that the contents are a mixture of various herbs. But unlike smoking the herbs listed on the label, smoking the products produces effects similar to those of marijuana, hashish, and other forms of cannabis.

"Hospitals in Europe began to report instances where a person appeared with all the symptoms of cannabis intoxication, but their drug screen was negative," Huestis says.

Users, parents, public health officers, and enforcement agencies all want to know: What really is in these products? How safe are they? Are they addictive?

[Back To Top](#)