

**SE MN TZD Workshop May 17, 2012 Breakout Session**  
**Synthetic Drug Update, Drug Recognition, & Drugged Driving by Mark Dungy**

This session provided information about synthetic drugs, such as plant food, bath salts, and fake weed.

- Bath salts and plant food are found in powder form and can be inhaled, injected or snorted. They are used like amphetamines and have similar effects. These items are sold under the guise as being legal when they are not and are often referred to as research chemicals, plant food or bath salts by those who manufacture or use drugs.
- Synthetic cannabinoids, also known as fake weed, fake pot or spice. Their chemical makeup is similar to THC in marijuana. They are applied to green or brown plant material and smoked. Smoking these materials may cause the tongue to turn green and can cause tongue blisters or burns. These products increase heart rate.
- Synthetic drug testing field kits are available from RSI laboratories.
- Synthetic drugs affect driving behavior similar to alcohol and other drugs.

Audience Questions:

- **What are the benefits of having a Drug Recognition Expert (DRE)?** DREs have enhanced training and can provide a more thorough examination to determine the specific drug impairment of a person. They also are able to provide more details and evidence for prosecution. Not all locations have access to a DRE but there are regional DREs that can be contacted for services at no cost.
- **Where can you get testing materials for synthetic drugs?** Med Tox and other laboratories offer several testing options for a fee. BCA offers free testing but they are not currently accepting samples of plant food or bath salts. BCA does accept samples of synthetic cannabinoids.
- **Are there any federal laws regarding synthetic drugs?** There is an emergency ban on synthetic drugs but no federal law. Minnesota has state laws regarding all of these products and there is pressure to change the current law to become more stringent.
- **Have any synthetic drug labs been seized?** At this point formulas have been recovered from scenes but no labs have been seized. Mobile and fixed labs may be treated under current clandestine laboratory ordinances.