

DRUG PARAPHERNALIA: Know What to Watch For May 2005

Drug paraphernalia comes in a lot of forms. There are a variety of stores in many shopping malls selling items that not only promote drug use, but also provide the means for teens to engage in drug-related activities. Some paraphernalia is specifically designed to look like everyday items that you might find in a teen's room, backpack, purse or car. Drug paraphernalia is often marketed specifically to youth, with colorful logos, celebrity pictures and designs like smiley faces on the products.

The term "drug paraphernalia" refers to "any equipment, product or material of any kind which is primarily intended or designed for use in manufacturing, compounding, converting, concealing, producing, processing, preparing, injecting, ingesting, inhaling or otherwise introducing into the human body a controlled substance."

The items are meant to look harmless and disguise the dangers of taking controlled substances. Other paraphernalia made to look like magic markers can conceal pipes, and small, hand-painted, blown glass items look more like pretty trinkets than pipes or stash containers. Identifying drug paraphernalia can be difficult because the products are often sold as if they were designed for legitimate purposes. Marijuana pipes and bongs frequently carry a misleading disclaimer indicating that they are intended to be used only with tobacco products. The appearance of drug paraphernalia varies depending on the manufacturer and intended purpose. Increasingly, bongs, pipes and other paraphernalia are manufactured in bright, trendy colors and bear designs such as skulls, devils, dragons, and wizards. The products are made in an attempt to normalize drug use and make the products attractive to teenagers and young adults.

How can drug paraphernalia be sold? It can be obtained through various means, including over the Internet and through mail-order businesses. Items are frequently sold at "head shops," tobacco shops, trendy gift and novelty shops, gas stations, and convenience stores. Drug paraphernalia are illegal.



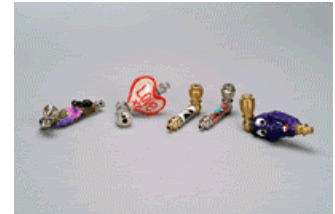
Soft drink can with false bottom.



Felt tip marker with internal drug pipe.



Hollow pager adapted to conceal drugs.



Assorted collection of drug pipes.

KNOW WHAT TO LISTEN FOR!

Have you ever heard your teenager reference the time "4:20?" Many adults don't realize that 420 (pronounced "four-twenty") is a "secret code" for getting high. The reference to 420 presumably dates back to 70's stoner lingo but is still widely recognized by the youth today. Some people have even designated April 20th as "National Pot Smokers Day." Teens can use this reference in conversations, notes, instant messaging or have stickers in the car or on a backpack.



Pipe



Bongs