

GOVERNMENT OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA

OFFICE OF THE ATTORNEY GENERAL

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Office of the Attorney General Obtains Order for One-Year Shutdown of Bloomingdale Store for Selling Synthetic Drugs

Action Latest in OAG Efforts to Combat Dangerous Synthetic Cannabinoids

WASHINGTON, D.C. – Attorney General Karl A. Racine today announced that the Office of the Attorney General (OAG) has obtained a court-ordered permanent injunction forcing a one-year shutdown for a Bloomingdale store that repeatedly sold synthetic drugs. The store was the site of multiple seizures of synthetic drugs as well as the shooting of an employee that police believe may have been related to sale of the drugs.

OAG attorneys have been pursuing litigation against the store’s owner, William Early, since November, 2014. Defendant Early is a retired Metropolitan Police Department officer.

The order, issued by Superior Court Judge John M. Campbell:

- Prevents Early or anyone else from operating the store, Aida’s Electronics at 209 Florida Avenue NW, for a year;
- Prevents Early from operating other businesses in the location;
- Prevents Early from selling, storing or using any sort of synthetic drugs at the location;
- Cancels all of Early’s business licenses and prevents any other party from obtaining a business license for the location for a year;
- Cancels any Certificate of Occupancy for the location and prevents Early from allowing any other person or entity from obtaining a Certificate of Occupancy for the location for a year;
- And orders Early to pay \$1,200 in damages to the District’s Drug-, Firearm-, or Prostitution-Related Nuisance Abatement Fund.

“Synthetic drugs poison our youth and endanger our public safety,” Attorney General Racine said. **“The message is clear: Businesses that sell synthetic drugs in the District of Columbia will face regulatory enforcement and litigation in court that could shut down their businesses for up to a year.”**

OAG initially entered into a preliminary injunction consent order with Early in which he agreed to close his store for six months and cease selling synthetic cannabinoids. Less than a month later, Early violated the agreement by re-opening his store under a new name. OAG attorneys filed a motion for contempt to reopen the case, and the permanent injunction consent order was entered on Friday, July 11.

A copy of the order is attached.

Other OAG Actions on Synthetic Drugs

OAG has taken action in several other cases to prevent the distribution of synthetic marijuana to District residents:

- OAG filed suit against the owner of **3661 Georgia Avenue NW** and served a notice of unlawful activity to the owner of **3653 Georgia Avenue NW** under the District's public-nuisance laws, and the owners of both stores have entered into agreements to stop the sales of synthetic drugs; the agreements contain provisions allowing OAG to monitor compliance;
- OAG filed a similar action at a store at **800 Upshur Street NW**, and the property owners have initiated eviction proceedings against the tenant store;
- OAG is currently working with the Metropolitan Police Department to **investigate drug sales at other stores** in the District;
- And in February, Attorney General Racine, along with attorneys general from 43 other states and territories, **sent a letter to executives of nine oil companies** (British Petroleum, Chevron Corporation, Citgo Petroleum Corporation, Exxon Mobil Corporation, Marathon Petroleum Corporation, Phillips 66, Shell Oil Company, Sunoco, and Valero Energy Corporation) imploring them to help eradicate the sales of these drugs in their gas stations and convenience stores.

OAG works collaboratively with the Department of Consumer and Regulatory Affairs and the Metropolitan Police Department in fighting the sales of the drugs.

Synthetic cannabinoids – sometimes called “synthetic marijuana,” “synthetic pot,” “fake weed,” “K2,” or “Spice” – are extremely dangerous and can be deadly. They are synthetic chemicals, sprayed on organic or other consumable material, designed to mimic the effects of THC, the operative chemical in cannabis. However, synthetic cannabinoids can induce dangerous side effects, such as loss of consciousness, confusion, panic attacks, severe paranoia, hallucinations, and seizures.

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