



Thousand Oaks Police Department
Ventura County Sheriff's Department
2101 East Olsen Road, Thousand Oaks, California 91360, (805) 494-8200

The ABC's of Alcoholic Energy Drinks

Alcoholic energy drinks are very appealing and are easily obtained by children and teens. These 'alcopops' contain high levels of alcohol. Drinking one of these products can have a dangerous impact on driving or any other activity. A recent report indicates that virtually all of them are "infused with caffeine, ginseng and guarana" and are 6-12% alcoholic by volume. "For example, Joose is one of the more potent brands. At 23½ ounces, and 9.9 percent alcohol, a single can of Joose is the equivalent of three beers and eight cups of coffee." (*Thousand Oaks Acorn, 11/29/2007*)

According to Chris Albrecht, district administrator for the California Alcohol Beverage Control (ABC) office in Ventura County, although it is illegal for minors to purchase the drinks, cashiers are sometimes confused because the alcoholic and nonalcoholic packaging is so similar and the labels are hard to read. He goes on to say that it is a growing problem and a law enforcement challenge. (*Thousand Oaks Acorn, 11/29/2007*)

Section 23004 of the Business and Professions Code: "Alcoholic beverage" includes alcohol, spirits, liquor, wine, beer, and every liquid or solid containing alcohol, spirits, wine, or beer, and which contains one-half of 1 percent or more of alcohol by volume and which is fit for beverage purposes either alone or when diluted, mixed, or combined with other substances.

Heads Up for Patrol Officers...

- Calls for service might involve:

Students that have been drinking these on campus.

Parents may not realize their children are actually drinking alcohol.

You might come across someone who has consumed it without knowledge it contained alcohol.

- The same laws apply to alcoholic energy drinks as any other alcoholic beverage (sales and consumption).

- You will come into contact with individuals who have been drinking these beverages – being able to recognize these types of beverages will increase your probable cause for contact.

What happens when energy drinks are combined with alcohol?

This combination carries a number of dangers:

- Since energy drinks are stimulants and alcohol is a depressant, the combination of effects may be dangerous. The stimulant effects can mask how intoxicated you are and prevent you from realizing how much alcohol you have consumed. Fatigue is one of the ways the body normally tells someone that they've had enough to drink.

- The stimulant effect can give the person the impression they aren't impaired. No matter how alert you feel, your **blood alcohol concentration (BAC)** is the same as it would be without the energy drink. Once the stimulant effect wears off, the depressant effects of the alcohol will remain and could cause vomiting in your sleep or respiratory depression.

- Both energy drinks and alcohol are very dehydrating (the caffeine in energy drinks is a diuretic). Dehydration can hinder your body's ability to metabolize alcohol and will increase the toxicity, and therefore the hangover, the next day.

http://www.noys.org/Energy_Drinks_and_Alcopops_final.doc