



Rick Staly, Sheriff
FLAGLER COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE

"An honor to serve, a duty to protect."

NEWS RELEASE

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Flagler County Sheriff's Office Utilizes New Technology to Detect Illegal Drugs & Explosives Safer and Faster

BUNNELL, Fla. — The Flagler County Sheriff's Office has a new device in the fight against criminals and to keep deputies safe. The MX908 is a handheld device for the identification of suspected illegal narcotics and explosives, as well as real-time chemical detection. The device can be used to analyze solid, liquid, vapor, and aerosol samples in a matter of minutes.

The MX908 enables deputies to safely analyze trace amounts of substances without exposing themselves to potentially lethal amounts of fentanyl or other deadly drugs or explosives. FSCO investigators have already used the device multiple times in the field, including during undercover operations, and assisted the Special Investigations Unit in identifying illegal narcotics without the risk of exposure.

With FCSO's previous testing methods, investigators would need a substantial quantity of a substance to sample in order to use a traditional drug testing kit. The MX908 cannot only test residue faster and more accurately, it can even detect remnants of drugs not visible to the human eye. This feature of analyzing residue and trace-level amounts previously untestable allows deputies to detain a suspect, recommend charges, and potentially save lives from the harmful impacts of illegal drugs. Testing with a traditional kit in similar cases would possibly result in having to let a suspect go and wait for a formal lab report from the Florida Department of Law Enforcement.

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The MX908, a handheld device for real-time narcotics, explosives, and chemical detection.

The MX908 has many modes and uses. Its primary use is “Drug Hunter” mode, which not only analyzes trace amounts of drugs, but can also simultaneously identify mixed samples of street drugs like heroin, cocaine, and methamphetamines with fentanyl. No sample preparation is required with heroin like other analysis techniques.

The device also has modes to detect other dangerous substances besides narcotics. In “Explosive Hunter” mode, investigators can detect threats from military and commercial grade explosives to homemade explosive materials. In the “Chemical Warfare Hunter” mode, the MX908 can detect potentially deadly chemical threats as well as traditional chemical agents. This includes even Novichok nerve agents, also known as A-series agents, which are among the deadliest and hardest chemical agents to detect.

“Not only will this new equipment protect our deputies during field testing from dangerous exposure to deadly narcotics but in its other testing modes can protect our community from suspected explosives or chemical agents,” said Sheriff Rick Staly. “While we still have to have an FDLE lab test the substances for court, the MX908 allows deputies to make an immediate probable cause arrest.”

The MX908 cost \$101,525.49 and was paid for using state funding from the FDLE State Assistance for Fentanyl Eradication program. This grant was established in 2023 to conduct investigations designed to combat illegal fentanyl activity and provide reimbursement for fentanyl-related investigative operations.

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