

Street Value Encyclopedia Article

Street Value

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Street Value

When illegal drugs are seized by police or a drug law-enforcement agency, the officers or agents determine the street value of the drugs. Street value is the total income that drug traffickers would make if each gram were sold at the price currently being offered on the street. The street value then determines the significance of the seizure. In other words, a major drug seizure is one that has a very high street value.

However, the street value of drugs that have been seized is not always equal to the actual amount of income drug traffickers have lost. This is because the price of drugs rises sharply as they move down the distribution chain from the point of entry into the country. The following example shows how street value can be calculated:

- When cocaine comes into the United States, it could be sold at a pure-gram price of about \$20 per gram. A 100-kilogram unit contains 100,000 pure grams—thus its costs (to the drug trafficker) could represent \$2 million.
- In 2001 a gram of cocaine could sell on the streets directly to cocaine users for about \$100.
- One gram equals 1,000 milligrams. Of these 1,000 milligrams of cocaine sold on the streets, about 250 milligrams are "filler" substances. In other words, only 750 milligrams are actually pure cocaine.
- The price of a true "pure gram" of cocaine—1,000 milligrams of pure cocaine with no filler added—would be \$133.
- 100 kilograms of cocaine, then, has a street value of \$133 times 100,000 grams. In other words, the street value of 100 kilo- grams of cocaine equals \$13.3 million, more than six times as much as its initial cost (\$2 million).

See Also

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