

IDENTIFICATION OF FENTANYL PRECURSORS WITH HANDHELD 1064 nm Raman

INTRODUCTION

Transnational Organized Criminal (TOC) groups and their proxies have expanded their illicit drug production capabilities to include the deadly synthetic opioid, fentanyl. Fentanyl has become the drug production of choice among criminal cartels because it is 50 times more addictive than heroin, it can be produced using a small number of precursors, and requires less time and space to manufacture. Additionally, fentanyl can be mixed with more traditional drugs such as heroin, cocaine and methamphetamine, making it extremely profitable among street dealers. TOC actors and their proxies are now targeting a new demographic of drug users addicted to prescription drugs with the distribution of counterfeit pills, such as oxycodone, containing deadly amounts of fentanyl. One tablet is enough to cause an unintentional overdose fatality. TOC actors and their proxies use their clandestine Precursor Chemical Supply Chain (PCSC) networks to transport essential fentanyl precursors from source countries in Asia to illicit drug production laboratories in Latin America. The PCSC network used to source fentanyl precursor and analogs is difficult for law enforcement to track and degrade. In recent years, some fentanyl precursors have been added to an international control list to ensure regulatory agencies are monitoring suspect international express air mail, and maritime cargo shipments.

HANDHELD RAMAN SPECTROSCOPY FOR FENTANYL PRECURSOR IDENTIFICATION

The Rigaku series of handheld 1064 nm Raman spectrometers provide a nondestructive, reliable and safe method for analyzing and identifying dangerous chemicals such as fentanyl. More importantly, the identification of mislabeled fentanyl precursors has become a priority for law enforcement and regulatory agencies in their attempts to disrupt the PCSC networks and street-level drug distribution. Rigaku handheld Raman can scan through translucent packaging, greatly reducing the risk of exposure to the officer.



The Rigaku ResQ CQL handheld 1064 nm Raman has the ability to identify fentanyl precursor chemicals, such as “4-ANPP.”

The standard “Narcotics” library included on all three Rigaku models (the ResQ, ResQ FLX, and ResQ CQL) includes common cutting agents, as well as the following fentanyl precursor chemicals:

- 4-Anilino-N-phenethylpiperidine (4-ANPP)
- 4-Anilinopiperidine
- Benzylfentanyl
- N-phenethyl-4-piperidone (NPP)
- Propionic anhydride
- N-phenyl-4-piperidinamine
- Norfentanyl



ADDED FUNCTIONALITY FOR FENTANYL DETECTION

In addition to providing the ability to safely identify the most comprehensive list of fentanyl-related chemicals, the Rigaku ResQ CQL has the ability to provide detection of non-visible amounts of fentanyl as well. With the addition of QuickDetect Technology, users are able to analyze residues on surfaces, such as plastic baggies, vehicle compartments, and other locations where fentanyl may be concealed. This integrated system provides both bulk and trace analysis for a more complete analysis method as part of drug enforcement.

SUMMARY

The Rigaku handheld Raman instruments are a valuable tool for the identification and detection of fentanyl—including different analogs and their precursors. With the utilization of 1064 nm Raman technology, regulatory agencies have the ability to provide more comprehensive drug analysis through packaging, as well as non-visible surface detection, keeping first responders and health care professionals safe. The analyzer's on-board camera can capture barcode information, as well as images of samples or other related evidence. This information is stored with the analysis report in a tamper-proof file.



The Rigaku ResQ CQL with QuickDetect Mode detects non-visible amounts of a substance, such as fentanyl.

YOUR HANDHELD RAMAN CHECKLIST

1064 nm Raman scans dirty or impure substances—even through colored packaging	✓
On-board camera to assist with preserving chain of evidence	✓
Large chemical library with latest fentanyl and other drug analogs, including precursors	✓
Easy to use with results in < 1 minute and navigation via touchscreen or large buttons	✓
Automatic generation of reports	✓
Electronic storage of and ability to quickly share results	✓
Automated colorimetric analysis of non-visible substances removes guess-work of color matching	✓