

Powdered Alcohols Lose Label Approvals

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NEW YORK (AP) — Don't expect powdered alcohol to hit store shelves anytime soon.

A product called "Palcohol" gained widespread attention online in recent days after it was reported that the Alcohol and Tobacco Tax and Trade Bureau approved the powdered alcohol, including vodka and rum varieties. But a representative for the federal bureau, Tom Hogue, said in an email to The Associated Press late Monday that the approvals were issued in error.

Hogue did not immediately respond to requests for further details, including how the error occurred. In an email message, Palcohol's parent company Lipsmark said "there seemed to be a discrepancy on our fill level, how much powder is in the bag." It said it will resubmit the labels for approval.

According to the website for the Alcohol and Tobacco Tax and Trade Bureau, multiple varieties of Palcohol received "label approval" on April 8. Palcohol said in an email at around 5 p.m. EDT that it agreed to surrender the approvals "a few hours ago."

The Alcohol and Tobacco Tax and Trade Bureau is a part of the Treasury Department.

Earlier in the day, Palcohol said in an email that its founder Mark Phillips was traveling and unavailable for an interview. It said it wasn't releasing any information on distribution or pricing, and the company's website doesn't provide details on how it makes powdered alcohol.

Robert Lehrman, who runs a beverage law website that initially reported on the product, noted that Palcohol had to have gone through an extensive process before reaching the label approval stage.

"An oversight of this nature does not ring true to me," Lehrman said in a phone interview. He suggested that the bureau may have heard back from lawmakers wanting more information on the powdered alcohols.

The concept of a powdered alcohol isn't new. John Coupland, a professor of food science at Penn State University, noted that there have been multiple patents filed on powdered alcohols over the years. One by General Foods Corp. in the 1970s says the product is made by absorbing the ethanol onto some sort of carbohydrate powder.

On its website, Palcohol says it plans to offer six varieties of powdered alcohol, including vodka, rum and four cocktails — Cosmopolitan, Mojito, Powderita and Lemon Drop. The site says that a package weighs about an ounce and can fit into

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any pocket. It warns people that the powder should not be snorted.

According to the site, Phillips came up with the idea because he is an "active guy" and wanted a way to enjoy an adult beverage after long hours hiking, biking or camping without having to carry around heavy bottles.

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