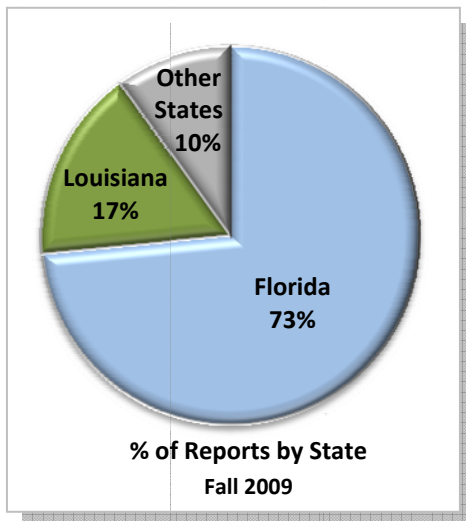


# CHINESE GYPSUM BOARD

## Background Information:

The first incident involving imported Chinese gypsum board (or drywall) was reported on December 22, 2008. As of Fall 2009, the Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC) has received over 1,500 reports from residents in 27 States, the District of Columbia, and Puerto Rico from people who believe their health symptoms or the corrosion of certain metal components in their homes are related to the presences of drywall produced in China.



At this time, experts believe that defective drywall imported from China was installed in homes built or remodeled after 2003. ***With all of the new construction in the South due to hurricanes in 2004 and 2005, most of the complaints are coming out of Florida and Louisiana.***

It is believed that this Chinese drywall is releasing higher than normal sulfur-containing odorous compounds. These compounds can corrode air conditioning coils and other copper-bearing materials.

The extent of indoor air quality and health problems is still being investigated. However, it is well known that ***exposure to sulfur-containing gases can create irritation and breathing disorders.***

## What are the symptoms to look for?

- **Corrosion:** Are any of your home's copper pipes, plumbing fixtures, or uninsulated electrical wires at light switches or receptacles blackened or corroded? Have your air conditioner coils failed early? Metal or copper corrosion of these types may indicate defective drywall in your home.
- **Odor:** Does your home have an odor that smells like rotten eggs, matches or fireworks? A sulfur odor in your home may indicate the presence of defective drywall.
- **Label:** Can you see the backside of your drywall? Some drywall from China is stamped with "Made in China" on the back. However, not all Chinese drywall has a label or markings. There are "finger print" indicator tests you can use to look for Chinese gypsum board (in the event it isn't marked as made in China).



Some homes with imported drywall have had damage to exposed wiring. It is unknown if any house fires have occurred related to the drywall.

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## How can Chinese drywall affect my health?

The health risks related to Chinese drywall is still being determined. However, those complaining of symptoms related to the imported drywall are reporting:

### *Short term exposure (hours):*

- Irritated and itchy eyes and skin
- Difficulty breathing
- Persistent cough
- Bloody nose
- Recurrent headaches
- Sinus infections
- Asthma attacks

### *Long term exposure (days to weeks):*

- Fatigue
- Loss of appetite
- Irritability
- Poor memory
- Dizziness
- Insomnia
- Headaches

Some people are more sensitive to possible exposure than others. Those most likely to get sick from breathing contaminated air include elderly, children, and people with asthma, allergies, lung disease and heart problems.

## What do I do if I suspect my home has imported drywall?

- The most important issue is your health and safety.
  - If you are suffering from the health symptoms described as common to the reports of exposure to problem drywall, please consult your physician as soon as possible.
  - If you experience any of the electrical or fire safety concerns described as common to the reports of exposure to problem drywall, please consult your local gas or electric supplier and a licensed electrician or building inspector as soon as possible.
- You should contact your State and local authorities to report your concerns and get direction on any help or resources in your area.

## Where can I find more information?

- [Wynn L. White Consulting Engineers](#) 877.891.2500
- [U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission](#) 800.638.2772
- [U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention](#) 800.232.4636
- [American Association of Poison Control Centers](#) 800.222.1222
- [U.S. Environmental Protection Agency](#) 214.665.6760
- [Louisiana Department of Public Health](#) 225.342.7136
- [EMSL Analytical, Inc.](#) 877.476.5866