

## Attorney General Bill McCollum News Release

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### McCollum: Con Artists Taking Advantage of Chinese Drywall Concerns

TALLAHASSEE, FL – Attorney General Bill McCollum today issued a consumer advisory to Florida homeowners affected by Chinese drywall, encouraging them to avoid scams related to the situation. At least two types of fraudulent activity involving the defective drywall have been reported to the Attorney General's Office by individuals in the building industry: bogus tests to determine the presence of the product and quick cure remedies which falsely claim to remove the corrosive properties of the product. The Attorney General cautioned homeowners not to fall victim to these scams and others which may develop.

According to authorities' reports, when defective Chinese drywall is present in a house, a chemical process causes black corrosion to appear on copper air conditioner coils and non-insulated copper wiring. If the air conditioner coils are corroded black, there is a strong likelihood that defective imported drywall is present in the home. Most homes that contain defective imported drywall were built between 2004 and 2008. If a home was not built during that time period it is unlikely that the product is present.

The Attorney General noted that a homeowner can determine if defective drywall is present in his or her home by asking the homebuilder or a qualified air conditioner technician to conduct a professional visual inspection. The presence of defective imported drywall cannot be determined by "testing" the air in the home. Additionally, if the substance is found during a visual inspection, it cannot be remedied with a spray or an ozone generator. These products may make the problem worse.

Homeowners should be aware of and attempt to avoid the following scams which builders have reported to the Attorney General's Office:

- Sale of bogus test kits. These can be expensive, often costing thousands of dollars, and are generally ineffective. The presence of defective imported drywall can only be determined through visual inspection.
- Solicited home inspections costing thousands of dollars by "experts" with no apparent qualification. Homeowners should beware of cold calls and door-to-door solicitors.
- Sale of sprays and applications which allegedly claim to miraculously cure the corrosion problem. Not only are these products ineffective, the addition of moisture may accelerate the corrosion problem.
- Sale of ozone generators. Ozone will actually increase the chemical reaction between the drywall and copper and the corrosion will be accelerated.

Consumers who wish to file a complaint about these scams may do so by calling the Attorney General's fraud hotline at 1-866-9-NO-SCAM (1-866-966-7226) or by filing a complaint online at <http://myfloridalegal.com>. More information is available online at: <http://www.cpsc.gov/drywall.pdf> and <http://www.cpsc.gov/info/drywall/index.html>