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## Frequently Asked Questions:

Revised 05/15/2009

Please recognize the following answers are based on the best available information and are subject to periodic review and revision as the Department of Health (DOH) continues to research the issues. Please check back often to review additional questions/answers and revisions.

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#### How can I tell if my home or the home I wish to purchase has problem drywall?

The presence of drywall imported from China in a home is not considered to be the primary problem; instead the Florida Department of Health (DOH) suggests people focus on the occurrence of premature and severe copper corrosion. DOH developed a [case definition](#) and a user friendly [step by step self-assessment guide](#) so that a homeowner or inspector can determine if their home has the signs typically found in homes with this problem. The most definitive way to determine if drywall in a home is imported from China is to locate "Made in China" [markings](#) on the back of a sheet of drywall. This is likely to require the cutting of holes in the drywall.

During our inspection of several homes DOH staff observed some drywall in homes with either no discernable markings or markings with no indication of the origin of manufacturer. The origin of unmarked or nondescript marked drywall is unknown. DOH observed that many homes contained a mixture of Chinese drywall and drywall marked as made in USA. Remember that we do not know how many sheets of the suspect drywall can cause problems. DOH staff did observe at least one home with marked Chinese drywall that showed none of the associated corrosion or odor problems.

#### Does this phenomenon pose a health hazard to me, my children, or pets?

This is undetermined at this time. DOH has not identified data suggesting an imminent or chronic health hazard at this time. DOH will continue to review all available data to help determine a more definitive answer to this question.

#### Will the Health Department sample and test my home for corrosive gasses or for the presence of Chinese drywall?

At this time DOH can not visit most homes to collect air or material samples for analysis. However, DOH is proceeding with a study on a few selected homes to better understand the phenomenon and occupant exposures in homes with this problem. This evaluation will occur over the next couple of months in conjunction with the [US Environmental Protection Agency \(EPA\)](#). As the results are available, we will post findings and updated guidance on this website.

#### Is there a test for "Chinese drywall"?

At this time we are unaware of any state or federal agency that has validated a specific test for drywall to determine if it will emit corrosive gases in a building under normal conditions. Currently, we can only recommend a visual assessment following our [step by step self assessment guide](#) for problem drywall. Private laboratories, consultants and government agencies have been testing drywall in order to understand the differences between American and imported drywall. We know of no one who has validated a test capable of detecting drywall that emits reduced sulfur gases under the same conditions that occur in the homes that are currently exhibiting copper corrosion. We all look forward to peer-reviewed and published procedures that meet this need.

#### Will you tell me which builder or community has imported drywall?

This is a defective materials issue and not a specific builder or community issue. At this time, the best method of determining if a building is impacted is to use our [case definition](#) and/or our [step by step self assessment guide](#).

#### Is the Chinese drywall radioactive?

Testing of the drywall for radiation demonstrated very low levels of the kind of radiation you would expect from materials derived from rocks. This radiation is part of the natural background level in our environment. We have posted our [radiological analysis report](#) for your information. For additional information regarding radiation, please review our [radiation: questions and answers document](#).

#### **Who can evaluate, repair, remediate or fix my home for this issue?**

Environmental consultants, licensed plumbers, electricians, air-conditioning contractors, mechanical contractors and drywall contractors, home inspectors, your builder, electrical engineers, heating, ventilation and air-conditioning engineers, industrial hygienists, building scientists to name a few. Be advised that each group will bring with them their own specialized expertise and experience and will likely be conducting a visual inspection for the presence of metal corrosion.

The [Florida Department of Business and Professional Regulation](#) (DBPR) is offering [advice on who you can hire to repair, remediate or fix your home](#). You can verify a contractor or other licensed building trade professional's license at <http://www.myfloridalicense.com>.

#### **Is there a known treatment to deal with suspect drywall emissions?**

DOH is not currently aware of any proven and effective treatment method other than removal and replacement of the suspected or known source material. Claims of treatment involving ozone, coatings, and air cleaners should be scrutinized for evidence of proven effectiveness. The [Office of the Attorney General of Florida](#) recently posted a [consumer alert](#) on this subject. DOH recommends against the use of ozone generators in occupied spaces, since ozone is a highly reactive and irritating molecule and is considered hazardous to people and pets. See US Environmental Protection Agency report "[Ozone Generators That Are Sold as Air Cleaners](#)".

#### **Do the corrosive gasses absorb and re-emit from other surfaces or materials?**

Based on reports from occupants and preliminary test results, this may be possible for some porous materials such as drywall and fabrics. It is uncertain whether this will affect materials such as concrete and lumber. The effectiveness of cleaning these materials is currently unknown.

#### **Who do I call if I wish to file a consumer complaint?**

See filing a [consumer complaint](#).

**Additional Frequently Asked Questions with answers are available through the [US Consumer Product Safety Commission's Drywall Information Center](#) (published late May 2009).**

*We recommend you do not send emails with questions or statements containing personal health information. Be advised that your submission and your email will become part of the public record subject to release in response to inquiries by the public in accordance with the Florida public records laws, Florida Statutes, Chapter 119.*

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