



*Virginia Department of Health*  
*DIVISION OF ENVIRONMENTAL EPIDEMIOLOGY*

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## **Frequently asked Questions about Drywall Imported from China**

### **Does Chinese drywall pose health risks?**

The Consumer Product Safety Commission has identified gases emitted from Chinese drywall from [samples](#) of imported drywall and from analyzing the [air](#) in homes built with defective drywall. The gases that are emitted can smell like “rotten eggs” and may irritate some individuals. Individuals that feel they may be affected should consult with their family physician. Current data does not suggest any immediate or chronic health problems associated with Chinese drywall. The Virginia Department of Health (VDH) continues to work with other federal, state, and local agencies and to assess data as it is made available.

Some of the gases emitted from Chinese drywall can corrode metals, in particular, copper. Corroded metals such as brass fittings, copper coils, and electrical wires may pose an immediate health risk. Leaking gas pipes and air conditioning units may expose you to Freon and natural gas. Corroded electrical wires may affect the normal functioning of smoke and carbon monoxide detectors.

If a natural gas leak is suspected you should contact your local gas company immediately.

### **How do I know if I have Chinese drywall?**

Most drywall from China will be labeled on the back of the drywall with “made in China,” however, it is possible that drywall from China may not have any markings. It is also possible that a home could contain both drywall made in the U.S. and drywall made in China. Homes considered to potentially be affected by Chinese drywall would have been built after 2003 and meet two or more of the following:

- 1) The presence of sulfur-like or other unusual odors
- 2) Drywall labeled “made in China”
- 3) Observed copper corrosion, indicated by black, sooty coating of un-insulated copper pipe leading to the air conditioning unit

- 4) Documented failure of air conditioner evaporator coil (located inside the air conditioning unit)
- 5) Confirmation by an outside expert or professional of the presence of premature copper corrosion on un-insulated copper wires and/or air conditioner evaporator coils (inside the air conditioning unit)

### **Who can I contact to inspect my home?**

If you think that your home has been affected by Chinese drywall you should contact a licensed professional. Plumbers, electricians, building contractors, home inspectors, environmental contractors, heating and air conditioning contractors, and other licensed professionals may be able to assist with evaluating damage to your home.

### **How can I treat my home if it is affected by Chinese Drywall?**

VDH is not aware of any effective treatment method other than complete removal and replacement of the drywall and affected metal. Quick and easy approaches such as painting the drywall, or the use of ozone generators have not been shown to be effective.

### **Will the Health Department sample and test my home?**

At this time the Virginia Department of Health does not conduct testing or analysis of building material or indoor air.

### **What should a homebuyer consider if concerned about buying a home that may contain Chinese Drywall?**

Please click [here](#).

### **What is being done in Virginia to address residents with Chinese Drywall in their homes?**

A Defective Drywall Task Force was formed by the Secretary of Commerce in March 2010. More information can be found [here](#).

### **Where can I find studies and reports by the federal government on Chinese Drywall homes?**

The Consumer Product Safety Commission has a [website](#) dedicated to imported drywall.

### **The Consumer Product Safety Commission has released the following interim remediation guidance.**

“Based on scientific study of the problem to date, HUD and CPSC recommend consumers remove all possible problem drywall from their homes, and replace electrical components and wiring, gas service piping, fire suppression sprinkler systems, smoke

alarms and carbon monoxide alarms. Taking these steps should help eliminate both the source of the problem drywall and corrosion-damaged components that might cause a safety problem in the home.” Click [here](#) to view the recommendation from HUD and CPSC.

**What relief is the government providing to homeowners?**

The Internal Revenue Service provides relief to homeowners with corrosive drywall. Please see [Revenue Procedure 2010-36](#) for more information.

**If I have a problem, who should I contact for help?**

You should first start by contacting the builder and then filing a complaint with the [Consumers Product Safety Commission](#) (toll-free consumer hotline: 800-638-2772).

VDH continues to monitor the evolving Chinese drywall issue and any potential impacts on public health. We encourage you to visit [Consumer Product Safety Commission](#) for more information and to check back often for updates and any new developments.

If you need further information regarding the health effects of Chinese drywall, please contact the Virginia Department of Health, Division of Environmental Epidemiology, 109 Governor Street, 4th Floor, Richmond, VA 23219, or call (804)-864-8182.

**Health Care providers FAQ provided by the Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry can be found by clicking [here](#).**

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