

Chinese Drywall Factsheet

How is Chinese Drywall different from regular drywall?

Drywall (gypsum board, wallboard, plasterboard or sheetrock) is a common building material that is made up of a layer of gypsum pressed between two thick sheets of paper. Gypsum is a naturally occurring mineral. Drywall that is made in China used gypsum with higher sulfur content than found in the United States. It was used in homes that were built or rebuilt after 2000. Chinese drywall gives off sulfur gasses that corrode or pit copper coils in air conditioning units, copper wiring and other metal building products, such as faucets.

How do I know if I have Chinese Drywall in my house?

There are several indicators of Chinese drywall. If your home was built or remodeled after 2000 and have 3 of these 5 items, you may have Chinese drywall in your home.

- Presence of rotten egg or sulfur -like odors
- Drywall with markings stamped on the back such as "Made in China".
- Documented failure of air conditioner evaporator coil (located inside the air handling unit). Often there are repeated replacements of evaporator coils.
- Observed corrosion or pitting of copper pipes or wiring or other metal building products, as faucets or metal fixtures. This may also look like black or sooty coatings on the metals.
- Confirmation by an outside building expert or professional for the presence of premature copper corrosion on un-insulated copper wires and/or air conditioner evaporator coils (inside the air handling unit)

Can this affect my health?

Little is known about the sulfur compounds associated with Chinese drywall. Testing is underway to tell what gases are being given off. Most people can smell these chemicals at levels below those known to cause health symptoms.

If a person comes in contact with sulfur gases, they may have:

- eye irritation (burning, itchy, red)
- irritated throat
- headache
- dry cough

What should I do if I have Chinese Drywall and have these symptoms?

1. See your doctor if you believe that you have come in contact with imported drywall and are concerned about your symptoms. Refer to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's website www.cdc.gov to learn more about drywall symptoms.
2. You should limit you time inside a house with strong odors. There is no recommendation at this time to move from your home, but you should consider spending less time inside.

3. Contact the Louisiana Department of Health and Hospitals (LDHH), Indoor Air Hotline at 1-888-293-7020 to participate in a health survey. By taking part in the survey, you will help the LDHH to figure out the scope of the problem in Louisiana and help them to give the residents more information in the future.

What is being done about Chinese Drywall in Louisiana?

The LDHH is looking into this problem and is working with the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC), the Florida Health Department and other state health and environmental agencies to find out if the public's health and the environment will be impacted by Chinese drywall and to develop a plan to provide the public with information and suggestions on how to remove Chinese drywall from homes. LDHH is working to find out the extent of the problem in Louisiana. For updates, please refer to the LDHH website <http://www.dhh.state.la.us/>. LDHH and EPA have conducted tests to help provide information on the sulfur compounds given off from the drywall to the residents.

For more information:

Louisiana Department of Health and Hospitals
Indoor Air Quality Health Education Hotline
Baton Rouge: 225-342-8303
Outside of Baton Rouge: 1-888-293-7020