

INVESTIGATION OF IMPORTED DRYWALL *STATUS UPDATE, August 2010*

I. Overview

This update describes new developments in the ongoing investigation of imported drywall and supplements the previous reports provided to the Committee. As of August 20, 2010, the U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission (“Commission” or “CPSC”) had received 3,526 incident reports related to drywall from 38 states, the District of Columbia, Puerto Rico, and American Samoa. More than 90 percent of reports are from five states – Florida (58 percent), Louisiana (19 percent), Mississippi (6 percent), Alabama (6 percent), and Virginia (4 percent).

In addition to the consumer reports on drywall received by the CPSC, our outreach efforts and investigations have secured information from many other sources, including state governors, county governments, importers, builders, distributors, installers, and other parties in the drywall distribution chain. Combining the information from all sources and eliminating duplicates, our best estimate of the number of homes that have registered complaints about drywall is approximately 6,300.

II. New Developments

The Federal Interagency Task Force revised the Interim Identification Guidance on August 27, 2010, to reflect additional work completed by the CPSC and its contractor, Environmental Health & Engineering (EH&E), and discussed in the joint report entitled Identification of Problematic Drywall: Source Markers and Detection Methods (dated May 28, 2010). The Task Force removed the factor addressing strontium levels in excess of 1200 ppb from the list of corroborating evidence. The Task Force does not believe strontium has a causative role in the problems reported with the problematic drywall and believes that its use may lead to false-positive results where a homeowner may mistakenly think their home contains problematic drywall.

III. Progress in the Investigation

We continue to investigate long term corrosion on electrical and fire safety components under contract with other federal laboratories. Initial results of analyses of components exposed to corrosive conditions are expected this autumn. Through this work, the Commission hopes to fine tune the Interim Identification Guidance and Interim Remediation Guidance (in conjunction with the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development), but the bulk of CPSC’s scientific investigation is complete. This has been the largest Compliance investigation in agency history. To date, CPSC has spent over \$5 million to investigate the chemical nature and the chain of commerce of problem drywall and to issue the associated identification and remediation guidance to assist impacted homeowners.