

## **INVESTIGATION OF IMPORTED DRYWALL STATUS UPDATE, MARCH 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 March 11, 2010, the U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission (“Commission” or “CPSC”) had received 3,031 incident reports related to drywall from 37 states, the District of Columbia, and Puerto Rico. More than 90% of reports are from Florida (59%), Louisiana (20%), Mississippi (6%) and Alabama (5%) and Virginia (4%).

During the week of March 29, we released additional information from the investigation of problem drywall including:

- **Interim Remediation Guidance:** The Interim Remediation Guidance addresses possible safety hazards related to corrosion in drywall homes by (1) eliminating the source of the corrosion, the problem drywall, and (2) replacing building components for which drywall-induced corrosion might cause a safety problem. The guidance calls for the replacement of: all possible problem drywall; all fire safety alarm devices (including smoke alarms and carbon monoxide alarms); all electrical components and wiring (including outlets, switches, and circuit breakers); and all gas service piping and fire suppression sprinkler systems.
- **Lawrence Berkeley National Laboratories:** LBNL measured in laboratory chambers the chemical emissions from thirty drywall samples. The top ten reactive sulfur emitting samples were of Chinese origin. Certain Chinese samples had emission rates of hydrogen sulfide one hundred times greater than non-Chinese samples. CPSC staff modeling based on these results shows that estimated concentrations of the reactive sulfur chemicals in the indoor air of a home that are predicted to result from the presence of the drywall can be approximately a factor of ten times greater for certain Chinese samples than for the non-Chinese samples.
- **Bacterial Study:** Based on a limited preliminary study of ten drywall samples, there appears to be no difference in the presence or absence of sulfur-reducing bacteria between the imported Chinese drywall and U.S. domestic drywall samples tested, including Chinese samples found by LBNL to have some of the highest reactive sulfur gas emissions.

### **II. Federal, State and International Coordination**

CPSC and its partner agencies have continued to coordinate activities to support the development and release of the documents described above. CPSC has investigated reports of deaths in our database and has found no correlation between drywall and tragic fatalities that families have suffered. CPSC is pursuing its own efforts and working in cooperation with CDC to follow up on reports of consumers with irritant health effects and any other reports that cite a fatality. CPSC has also been working with the Department of Housing and Urban Development to assist that agency in developing guidance for the use of local Community Development Block Grant program funds for the identification and remediation of problem drywall in homes. We continue to share information with the US Fire Administration to

inform the firefighting community of the issue and to request data on any fires which occur that may be related to problem drywall. In addition, coordination meetings with our agency partners are ongoing and we are working with the Council on Environmental Quality.

### **III. Progress in the Investigation**

CPSC continues to investigate the chain of commerce of drywall, and to question firms in the U.S. and abroad about their drywall activities. U.S. Customs and Border Protection (CBP) temporarily held a shipment that was coded with an import code indicating drywall, but released it once it was determined not to be drywall. CPSC staff closely monitors the developments of the Drywall Multi-District Litigation (MDL) and is in contact with the parties. CPSC also is investigating all reports of fire incidents related to drywall, but none have been confirmed to be related.