



Virginia Department of Health
DIVISION OF ENVIRONMENTAL EPIDEMIOLOGY
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**Frequently asked Questions Associated with Drywall
Imported from China**

Does Chinese drywall pose health risks?

Just because you have Chinese drywall in your home does not mean you will see any effects on your property or health.

Preliminary data indicates that some Chinese drywall emits gases that contain sulfur and other chemicals. These gases smell like rotten eggs and may irritate the respiratory system. However, Chinese drywall is not known to cause any additional immediate or chronic health problems. The Virginia Department of Health (VDH) will continue to collect and assess data regarding Chinese drywall as it is made available.

Some of the gases emitted from Chinese drywall can corrode metals, particularly copper. Corroded metals such as brass fittings, copper coils, and electrical wires may pose an immediate health risk because it could cause gas pipes to leak. You could be exposed to Freon or natural gas if parts of your air conditioning unit are corroded. Corroded electrical wires may cause smoke and carbon monoxide detectors not to function correctly.

Freon, also referred to as chlorofluorocarbons, is commonly used in refrigeration and air-conditioning units. Chlorofluorocarbons should not pose a health risk to homeowners if an air conditioning or refrigeration unit develops a leak. Only at extremely high levels of chlorofluorocarbon concentration have individuals experienced heart beat abnormalities, loss of coordination, narcosis and dizziness.

If you suspect you have a natural gas leak, contact your local gas company.

How do I know if I have Chinese drywall in my home?

Most drywall from China is labeled "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 that contain Chinese drywall were built after 2003 and meet two of the following criteria:

- 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 coils (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 your home has Chinese drywall, 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 remedy other than complete removal and replacement of the drywall. Painting the drywall or using ozone generators are not effective remedies.

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

Contact your home builder. You may also want to contact the [Consumer Product Safety Commission](#) via its toll-free consumer hotline: 800-638-2772 (TTY 800-638-8270).

VDH continues to monitor the evolving Chinese drywall issue and any potential impacts on public health. We encourage you to check back often for updates and any new developments.

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

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