**Chinese drywall isn’t all Chinese.**

In one of my previous articles I told you that not all “Chinese drywall” comes from China. Some of this reactive drywall is American! As reported in the December 20, 2010 issue of the Tampa Tribune, more homeowners with American born drywall are experiencing similar problems as previously documented Chinese born drywall counterparts. Health symptoms as well as corroded metals in electrical and mechanical systems are identical to those with known defective Chinese drywall. The Tribune reports nearly 100 homeowners in four states have joined lawsuits in just the past year! Some of these homes are un-livable and have been abandoned. We are all too familiar with what happens next, more foreclosures and financial devastation. Apparently the largest Florida suit includes over 90 residents all whom have National Gypsum drywall. Other drywall giants like US Gypsum and Georgia Pacific were also mentioned in the story as being under fire.

To refresh your memory, and the way I understand it, as part of the cleaning process of coal fired emissions, sulfur dioxide is removed and you are left with a nifty little product of coal ash from which drywall can be made. Al Gore would be proud.

The paper reported that one of the lawsuits purports their American made drywall was made with scraps from recycled Chinese made drywall. Different package, similar results but no one can “prove” this off gassing is the cause, hmmmm. Sounds like a good Erin Brockovich movie to me.

Michael Gardner, executive director of the Gypsum Association said “there has never been a problem with the use of FGD gypsum wallboard since it’s inception”. Really? From what I read it appears like liar liar pants on fire teaser is appropriate. Even the CPSC (Consumer Product Safety Commission) in it’s preliminary guidelines for remediating homes with this type of drywall says all the drywall and electrical wiring should be replaced. Gents and ladies, write a check for $100,000 and you’re in the ballpark. This doesn’t sound like a viable path for even the dumbest of the 3 little pigs. The University of Florida (go Gators) tested National Gyp products related to claims made by one occupant and confirmed high off gassing of sulfuric gas. National Gyp hired their own testing company and like a miracle, they didn’t find their drywall to have *enough* sulfur off gassing to cause corrosion. Two additional testing firms corroborated UF’s. National Gyp blames the Florida water. Funny thing is…the firm that NG hired does not support a mendacious statement like that. Funnier thing is that big bro (EPA) says they can’t find a link between all this corrosion common to so many people with the same drywall. Perhaps the needle in the haystack is stuck somewhere else. What a contest.

Good news is I found this in a CPSC (Consumer Product Safety Commission) status update report September 2010, “On September 30, 2010, the Internal Revenue Service (IRS) issued guidance providing relief to some homeowners who have suffered property losses due to the effects of imported drywall installed in homes between 2001 and 2009. Revenue Procedure 2010-36 enables certain affected taxpayers to treat damages for faulty drywall as a casualty loss and provides a “safe harbor” formula for determining the amount of the loss.”

People ask us all the time what they should do if they suspect they have reactive drywall or ask if we can check for it. Our company offers a Threshold Inspection, option A. Hire someone with an XRF gun to check for Strontium, option B. This is a good example of 2 birds and a stone. You can also have this gun slinger check for lead based paint too! Recently the CPSC updated some testing method information. “The Task Force does feel it is important to note that the screening for strontium with specially-calibrated x-ray fluorescence analyzers may still be a cost-effective and efficient manner in which to preliminarily identify areas of a home possibly affected by problem drywall for further testing such as for elemental sulfur in those areas. The Task Force emphasizes, however, that such identification of strontium does not necessarily indicate the presence of problem drywall, rather only that additional testing in those areas may be advised.” Or option C…“The Task Force believes that the May 28, 2010 report has shown the use of elemental (orthorhombic) sulfur to be the marker most directly correlated with the reports of problem drywall in a home. Although the results of such testing are not as quickly available as the strontium screening, testing for elemental sulfur is commercially available and is a more accurate method which provides greater assurances to interested parties.”

The Federal Trade Commission does issue a warning to consumers about bogus test kits and treatments… <http://www.ftc.gov/bcp/edu/pubs/consumer/alerts/alt164.pdf>.

As usual, it’s been fun. If you’ve got questions, concerns or other subjects you would like my opinion on please shoot me an email to jon@inspectagator.com or call the office at 407.678.HOME (4663). If we all stick together, nobody gets burned!