

# Chinese Drywall Found to Differ Chemically

By LESLIE WAYNE

Federal investigators reported Thursday that imported Chinese drywall that homeowners have linked to health problems and odors had higher levels of some chemicals than its domestic counterparts.

The investigators, however, were unable to link the chemicals, sulfur and strontium, to the health problems and smells in thousands of homes built during the recent housing boom, and said further testing was under way to determine any possible connection.

The preliminary findings are part of a larger study by federal agencies, including the Consumer Product Safety Commission and the Environmental Protection Agency, into complaints from nearly 2,000 homeowners that their recently built homes emit odors and cause nosebleeds and respiratory problems. The owners also say their electrical appliances have failed and their wiring has corroded. It has been estimated that more than 40,000 homes could have the imported drywall. Large amounts of Chi-

nese drywall were imported over the last few years when domestic supplies ran short. An estimated seven million sheets made in China were used as a substitute. Most of the complaints come from Florida, Virginia and Louisiana, where the widespread de-

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## Other tests seek a link between ailments and sulfur and strontium.

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struction after hurricanes lead to rapid rebuilding of damaged homes.

"The first sets of data released today start to explain the differences between Chinese and non-Chinese drywall," said Lori Saltzman, director of the division of health sciences at the product safety commission. "Although we know more now than we did just a few weeks ago, we are continuing to learn as much as we can."

One new finding reported on

Thursday was that hundreds of thousands of Chinese drywall sheets remained in warehouses in the United States. The agency has identified those warehouses, but it did not disclose their locations. It said it has "put them on notice" not to sell the material. In addition, the commission is working with the Department of Homeland Security to monitor ports to see that no new Chinese drywall comes into the country.

The tests were conducted in three homes in Florida and three in Louisiana, four with Chinese drywall and two without. A total of 1,200 air samples were taken from the homes to test for contamination.

In November, the results of a study of 50 homes will be released, along with any recommendations for how to treat the problem.

The government's investigation into Chinese drywall is the largest in the history of the product safety commission, costing \$3.5 million. It also puts a renewed spotlight on problems related to all types of products imported from China. Millions of

NY Times

10-30-09