

AAJ: Drywall Manufacturers Should Register with CPSC; Have Strict Labeling Requirements

Greater CPSC Oversight Will Help Protect Consumers, Prevent Chinese Drywall Problems in Future

Washington, DC—Recent hazards associated with drywall show the need for greater labeling and registration requirements, according to comments submitted to the Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC) by the American Association for Justice (AAJ). The comments are in response to the agency's notice seeking guidance regarding identifying labels for drywall.

“Mandating a set of uniform markings on all drywall would greatly assist homeowners and investigators in isolating the source of drywall problems,” according to AAJ's submitted comments.

Drywall, especially drywall manufactured in China, has been identified by the CPSC as containing high levels of hydrogen sulfide, causing corrosion of metals in homes and contributing to numerous health-related problems. To date, the agency has not recalled any drywall or clearly identified any specific batches of the bad drywall, making the scope of the problem difficult to identify. The agency is now moving to establish protocols to identify homes with the corrosive drywall and determine effective remediation procedures.

AAJ's comments request the CPSC to:

- Require labels to include enough information so that the drywall remains easily identifiable when installed, including manufacturer name, plant name and location, date of production, and batch or lot number.
- Ensure the location of the labels be easily accessible, including labeling both sides of the drywall.
- Require drywall manufacturers that import drywall into the U.S. to register with the CPSC, including plant locations and the names and descriptions of products.

“There is little doubt that the previous lack of oversight over drywall has contributed to the prolonged problems thousands of homeowners are experiencing,” said AAJ President Anthony Tarricone. “New guidelines will help aid in quickly identifying any problematic drywall in the future and make it easier to recall the product, if needed,” added Tarricone.

As of late January, the CPSC had reported receiving over 2800 incident reports related to drywall from 37 states and the District of Columbia.

On February 19, 2010, the U.S. District Court in New Orleans will begin an evidentiary hearing to hold Taishan Gypsum, a Chinese manufacturer of drywall, in default for failing to respond to a putative class action brought by builders that used the Chinese company's drywall in homes. The Chinese drywall multidistrict litigation bellwether trial will begin on March 15, 2010.

For more information on Chinese drywall, view AAJ's timeline at http://www.justice.org/resources/Timeline_Jan_2010_update_1_27_10.pdf.

To see the CPSC's latest report on the drywall investigation, visit <http://www.cpsc.gov/info/drywall/index.html>.

For a copy of the comments, please contact AAJ Communications at 202-965-3500 x8609.