

# GYPSUM ASSOCIATION

## comments on imported **CHINESE WALLBOARD ISSUE**

*Some wallboard imported from China is reportedly off-gassing unpleasant, "rotten egg" odors, and the substance causing the odors is apparently corroding electrical wiring, evaporator coils and other metals.*

The exact cause or causes for these problems is under investigation by governmental agencies including the National Institute of Science and Technology (NIST), and the Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC), as well as various state agencies.

The wallboard in question was apparently imported from China between 2005 and 2007 when the U.S. housing boom was at its peak and domestic producers could not keep up with wallboard demand.

During this period, approxi-

mately 320 million square feet of wallboard was imported from China, less than one-half of one percent of the wallboard sold in North America. Most of the imported Chinese wallboard was used in the Gulf and Atlantic coast regions of Texas, Louisiana, Alabama, Mississippi, and Florida.

Homeowners concerned about the origin of the wallboard used in their homes should contact their builder or supplier. Homeowners and prospective home buyers can be assured the gypsum board produced by members of the Gypsum Association ([www.gypsum.org](http://www.gypsum.org)) is manufactured to the highest possible quality standards.

By code, all gypsum board used in the U.S. must meet the internationally recognized consensus standard, ASTM C1396,

*Standard Specification for Gypsum Board.* This standard requires each gypsum panel or package to have legibly marked on it: the thickness, the name of the producer or supplier, the brand name, if any, and the ASTM specification for the prod-



uct. Wallboard manufactured in the U.S. and Canada typically is marked on the bundling (end) tape that binds two sheets of board into a single shipping unit.

All gypsum wallboard made in the United States and Canada is manufactured by members of the Gypsum Association. To maintain industry-wide, quality-assurance standards, all members of the Gypsum Association subscribe to



# Gypsum Board

[www.gypsum.org](http://www.gypsum.org)

*Taking safety and efficiency to new heights*



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an ongoing third-party, in-plant product inspection and labeling service. This independent certification and labeling process ensures the highest level of consistency, quality and performance.

Gypsum Association members use both natural gypsum ore and byproduct (synthetic) gypsum to manufacture their products. All natural gypsum ore used by Association members is mined or quarried solely in North America.

Byproduct gypsum is primarily produced when coal-fired power plants clean their emissions. Stack emissions are fed through a limestone slurry in a process that yields calcium sulfate, the chemical name for gypsum. Byproduct gypsum is chemically identical to natural gypsum ore. All byproduct gypsum used in the manufacture of North American-

made gypsum products is acquired from domestic sources.

The properties of both natural and byproduct gypsum are carefully controlled to ensure that only the highest quality materials are used in the manufacture of domestically-made gypsum products.

Fly ash, a residue created by the burning of coal, cannot be used as a substitute for gypsum as it has a different chemical composition than gypsum. Members of the Gypsum Association do not use fly ash as a substitute for gypsum in manufacturing gypsum wallboard.

In 2007 U.S. gypsum wallboard manufacturers used approximately 8.3 million short tons of byproduct gypsum, accounting for approximately 28 percent of all the gypsum used by members of the Gypsum Association that year.

Gypsum wallboard provides fire resistance, ease of maintenance and decoration, and is an extremely versatile and environmentally-friendly building material. Domestically-produced gypsum wallboard has been used successfully in the construction of homes and buildings in North America for over 100 years with an excellent performance record. Homeowners and prospective home buyers should have no reservations about having gypsum wallboard manufactured by members of the Gypsum Association used in the construction of their homes.

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