

Drywall from China blamed for problems in homes

Homeowners are joining in class-action lawsuits and U.S. senators are calling for bans and investigations into Chinese-made drywall that tests show can emit sulfur gases that corrode copper coils and electrical and plumbing components, and sicken occupants with its rotten-egg-type smell.

The problem surfaced in Florida in late 2008, but similar occurrences have been linked to tens of thousands of homes in the Deep South, the Midwest, the Southwest, and the Pacific Northwest.

Jerry Auvil of Portland-based Exterior and Interior Specialists Local 2154, which represents drywall hangers, wasn't aware of any problems in the Portland area. A spokesman for Associated Ceiling and Wall Contractors in Portland said he had heard something about

the bad drywall back east, but hasn't fielded any contractor complaints in the Pacific Northwest.

It's gotten so bad in the South, however, that U.S. Senators Bill Nelson (D-Fla.) and Mary Landrieu (D-La) have filed legislation seeking a recall and temporary ban of the imported drywall. Louisiana and Florida Governors Bobby Jindal and Charlie Crist also are calling on the Environmental Protection Agency and the Center for Disease Control to step in and investigate.

Attorneys for homeowners in Florida, Louisiana, and Alabama contend the toxic chemicals emanating from the drywall have corroded electrical wiring and components of air-conditioning and other household appliances and, that in some instances, have made homeowners ill.

Attorneys allege the imported drywall contains fly ash residue — a waste material captured from the chimneys of coal-fired power plants. The material that wouldn't burn was recycled into the drywall instead of being taken to a landfill.

A target of the lawsuits is drywall manufacturer Knauf Plasterboard Tianjin Co. Ltd. of China, and exporter Rothchild International Ltd. of the Chinese port city of Ningbo. Several homebuilders in Florida and Louisiana also are named in lawsuits.

Over 500-million-pounds of drywall were imported from China between 2004 and 2007 when the construction boom was at a peak and domestic materials were said to be in short supply.

Sen. Nelson said drywall from China arrived at ports around the country, including 60 million pounds in New Orleans and 27 million pounds in Mississippi — two areas hard hit by Hurri-

cane Katrina.

"I believe you're going to see this is widespread," Nelson said.

It has been estimated that as many as 300,000 homes across 40 states may contain the defective drywall. Many of those homes are uninhabitable and will need to be completely gutted. Affected electrical appliances also will need to be replaced.

America's Watchdog, a consumer advocacy group based in Washington, D.C., told the Labor Press via e-mail that the tainted drywall is likely "all over Oregon and Washington."

America's Watchdog President M. Thomas Martin believes some of the drywall was trucked up from California by subcontractors using undocumented workers.

"This is why your labor unions never saw it. We don't think they would have touched the stuff," Martin said.

On its Web site, the organization reports that unionized drywall installers in the South "would not hang the drywall, because it stunk, and or it made workers sick."

In their bill, Senators Nelson and Landrieu are asking the secretaries of Treasury and Housing and Urban Development to provide mortgage relief and other assistance to affected homeowners, though they want the costs to be borne by the manufacturers and not U.S. taxpayers.

"Homeowners are already suffering from depressed home values and negative economic conditions," Nelson said.

Nelson is a member of the Senate Commerce Committee, which oversees the Consumer Product Safety Commission. The CPSC also has launched a federal investigation.

At a town hall meeting April 8 in

West Palm Beach, Florida, with Sen. Nelson and Congressman Robert Wexler (D-Fla.), Laborers Union official Ron Nault raised concerns about workers.

"What about the workers taking this stuff out of the homes?" Nault asked. "What do we do with the thing? Put it in a landfill?"

Nault then offered his own suggestion: "Put it on a barge and send it back to China."

In recent years, Chinese imports have been implicated in one safety scandal after another: lead-laced toys; toxic pet food; poisoned toothpaste and snacks; tainted seafood and beef; and defective tires and valve stems.

Ombudsperson can assist with workers' comp questions

SALEM — Have you been hurt on the job, or do you know someone who has? If so, call Oregon Workers' Compensation Ombudsperson Jennifer Flood in Salem for guidance in the complex world of the state's workers' compensation insurance system.

The ombudsman's staff can provide straight answers at no charge in the areas of workers' comp claims, appeal rights, claims deposition agreements, claim closures, determination orders, reconsiderations, aggravation rights, conflict resolution and informal mediation.

Flood can be reached toll-free at 1-800-927-1271.

Invest in
America

with **DRIVING** the **DISCOUNT**



Credit union members drive away with two great deals. A terrific discount on most new **GM** and **Chrysler** vehicles. Plus a low loan rate from your credit union!

**Operating Engineers #3
Federal Credit Union**
Union STRENGTH · Union PURPOSE · Union PRIDE

22 Branches to Serve You,
Including 805 E. Berkeley St. Gladstone, OR 97027

Whatever vehicle you choose, drive away happy knowing you just did your part to Invest in America.

NCUA Credit unions are equal opportunity lenders.

BE DRIVEN... Find out more at **LOVEMYCREDITUNION.ORG.**

FREE

BARGAIN COUNTER

Free ads to subscribers

DEADLINE: Friday prior to publication

Published 1st and 3rd Fridays

Send to:
NW Labor Press, PO Box 13150,
Portland, OR 97213

Classified ads MUST include area code on all phone numbers or they will not be published

- 15 words or less
- Include address label from front page and telephone number
- Sorry, we cannot accept ads over the telephone
- No commercial or business ads
- 1 ad per issue
- Type or print legibly

Automotive

'72 CAVEMAN CAMPER, 2 extra rebuilt jacks, \$350. 541 544-2030
'94 CHEV PICKUP, reg cab, SWB, AT, AC, PS, PB, CC, canopy, liner, 60,000 on Goodwrench 350, custom wheels, \$4,395. 503 285-6842
'00 Honda Accord Coupe EX, 4cyl, 5spd, pdl, pw, cc, mnrf, alarm, 6-disc changer 1 owner, non-smk, charcoal cloth/silver exterior, 42,800 miles \$9,200. 503 577-9324
'74 JEEP J20, 3/4 ton pickup, strong, straight, reliable, many extras, \$2,000. 541 471-1670
TIRE CHAINS, NEW, 1 pair fits 235-75R 15, lug reinforced, USA made; 1 pair fits 12.50-15 or 16.5. \$50 per pair. 360 213-9540
1988-92 hood for F250 truck \$100; sway bar 1988 F250 Ford truck \$80. 503 761-1190

HOUSING

ROCKAWAY BEACH house, 3 bd, 2 bath, sleeps 10, Jacuzzi tub, all amenities. 1-503 355-2136 or 503 709-6018
ROCKAWAY BEACH vacation home, 3 bed, sleeps 8, Beachfront, all amenities, \$200/nite. 503 812-5534
3 BED, 2 BATH, + office, 99' manufactured home, Eagle Creek on Clackamas River, access to fishing, swimming and rafting, \$250,000. Call for specifics, 503-679-4945
EAGLE CREST 3 bdr, 2 bath, sleeps 8, all amenities. August 2-9 or 9-16. \$950/week. 971 506-1972
ROCKAWAY OCEAN FRONT, 5 bedrooms, 2 bath, best rental on the coast! 503 777-5076, <http://home.comcast.net/~rockaway.beach>

WANTED

OLD WOODWORKING tools, planes, levels, chisels, handsaws, slicks, adzes, wrenches, folding rulers, leather tools, tool chests. 503-659-0009
GUNS, will pay cash. 503 449-0584 (Kenny)
MAUSER OR SPRINGFIELD sporter, also project guns, refinish, repair, etc. 503 888-3423 (Dave)
COLLECTOR PAYS cash for older unique and unusual

items, antiques. 503 653-1506
JUNK CARS, free removal of unwanted cars and pickups. 503 314-8600
MOTORCYCLES running or not. cash paid, top dollar. also musical instruments. (503)880-8183.
ELECTRONIC PINBALL machines wanted, call 503-649-2951 with what you have

FOR THE HOME


KENMORE UPRIGHT freezer, looks like new, \$100. 503 775-7966 (Mark)
1920 VICTORIAN COUCH and chair \$900; bamboo/glass large dining table w/8 chairs \$400. 503-695-3311

Sporting Goods

'03 SUZUKI SAVAGE 650cc motorcycle, 6k miles, saddlebags, sissibar, crashbars, manual & extras, \$3,000. 503 621-3090 (Doug)
2006 YAMAHA ROADSTAR, red, upgraded exhaust & air intake, re-jettied, 3 years on extended warranty, \$7,995.00 OBO. 503 708-6909
2007 KAWASAKI 650R, deep blue, 3,000 miles, \$5,000 OBO, transferable 1 year maint. agreement, fast crotch rocket, great shape. 503 367-0167
12 FT. ALUMINUM SMOKERCRAFT boat, \$295; Johnson 15 HP motor, \$650; 2-1/4T floor jack, like new, \$40, 503-538-4369

MISCELLANEOUS

BOLENS G12 garden tractor w/30" tiller, needs engine work, \$150. 503 625-6864
HILTI ROTARY hammer and drill, no TE-6-2, \$150, Wiluwiki Super Sawzall, in box, excellent cond, \$115. 503 643-6897
INDUSTRIAL SEWING machine w/extras, closed shop, \$500. 503 244-2889
QUALITY BRED AKC black lab puppies, blocky heads, ready May 18th. \$600. Near Eugene. 541-998-5296



Zachary Zabinsky

- Social Security
- SSI - Disability Claims

Personal Attention To Every Case

Working For Disability Rights
Since 1983

NO FEE WITHOUT RECOVERY
621 SW Morrison, Portland

503-223-8517