

# CECERE SANTANA

**Attorneys at Law**

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### **Is there Chinese Drywall in your Home?**

Defective drywall from China has been installed in many homes throughout South Florida. Multiple hurricanes including Katrina and Wilma combined with the housing boom caused construction supplies to be scarce. Consequently, home manufacturers and contractors began purchasing and installing drywall from China starting around 2003. For many homeowners, the first sign that they may have a drywall problem is the presence of a strong sulfur odor described as the smell of rotten eggs. The defective drywall emits the sulfur when it is exposed to moisture and humidity. Another sign that a home may have defective Chinese drywall is if the air-conditioning coils, copper tubing and electrical wiring are corroding and failing.

Many people exposed to defective Chinese drywall in their homes have experienced health problems as a result of the toxic fumes. Symptoms can include mild to moderate respiratory irritation, headaches, irritated eyes, nose bleeds, coughing, sneezing, difficulty breathing and symptoms similar to bronchitis and asthma.

The Florida Department of Health recently hired an engineering firm to perform testing of Chinese drywall samples and testing of samples of drywall made in the United States. There was a distinct difference found in the Chinese drywall in that the Chinese drywall samples emitted a sulfur odor when exposed to extreme heat and moisture.

If you suspect that your home has defective Chinese drywall, you can have an inspection performed by a licensed home inspector or other professional trained in inspections of this type. Unfortunately, the only way to eliminate the effects of Chinese drywall is to rip out the existing drywall and replace it with new drywall. Also, wiring, tubing and air conditioning units may have to be replaced as well. Obviously, this process can be time consuming and expensive.

The damage from defective Chinese drywall may not be covered under your homeowner's insurance policy, so homeowners may be left to shoulder the costs of repairs on their own. A complete analysis of your homeowner's insurance policy must be made to determine if coverage does exist for all or part of the damages from defective Chinese drywall. Furthermore, there are potential claims against the manufacturers, builders, developers and installers of defective Chinese drywall. You should consult with an attorney for an analysis of your claim.

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*Attorney Michael Cecere from Cecere Santana, PA represents property litigation and personal injury cases dealing with automobile accidents, slip and falls, dangerous drugs and products; medical malpractice, nursing home negligence, dog bites and other cases relating to personal injury due to the fault of others. He is a Board Certified Civil Trial Attorney and former insurance defense attorney. You may reach him at (954)653-9969, toll-free at (866) 913-3948 or at [mcecere@ceceresantana.com](mailto:mcecere@ceceresantana.com) with any questions or comments.*