



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:
October 19, 2009

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FLORIDA TO HOST SCIENTIFIC FORUM ON CORROSIVE IMPORTED DRYWALL
Technical Symposium is First of its Kind in U.S.

TALLAHASSEE, Fla.--In response to the discovery of drywall in homes that may be responsible for new health complaints, premature metal corrosion and sulfur-type odors, scientific researchers, federal and state government officials, and health and safety professionals will gather in Tampa, Florida, November 5-6, 2009, for a Technical Symposium on Corrosive Imported Drywall. The scientific forum is the first of its kind in the U.S. to address the issues surrounding certain types of imported gypsum drywall.

The symposium is co-sponsored by the Florida Department of Health, University of Florida's Hinkley Center for Solid and Hazardous Waste Management, and the University of South Florida's College of Public Health. Among the various topics to be discussed are:

- Corrosive drywall analysis and detection methods
- Emissions testing
- Exposure and toxicology concerns
- Remediation policies and practices

The symposium's keynote speaker is U.S. Sen. Bill Nelson, D-Fla. In August, Nelson traveled to China to meet with Chinese leaders about the defective drywall concerns in the U.S. Sen. Nelson is also one of four U.S. senators to ask the Federal Emergency Management Agency to assist affected homeowners with rental and other emergency assistance.

Other agencies participating in the symposium include the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, Consumer Product Safety Commission, Environmental Protection Agency and U.S. Geological Survey. Dr. David Krause, state toxicologist for the Florida Department of Health, says the symposium is an important first-step in facilitating open communication between regulatory and public health agencies, researchers, practicing consultants and commercial laboratories. "One of our primary objectives is to dispel inaccuracies surrounding the issue of drywall and copper corrosion. By bringing scientists together in one venue, we can collectively discuss the data and research surrounding this environmental and public health concern."

Homeowners of houses built since 2003 have reported sulfur-type odors and copper corrosion in states including Florida, Louisiana and Virginia. As of September 15, 2009, the Florida Department of Health reported 555 cases of corrosive imported drywall to county health departments in 30 counties.

Contact hours for public health professionals and continuing education units are available. The symposium also will feature scientific poster presentations selected from submitted abstracts and based on technical findings. The symposium will be held at the Mainsail Suites Hotel & Conference Center in Tampa. Registration is \$300; discounts are available to students. For more information about the Technical Symposium on Corrosive Imported Drywall, visit www.drywallsymposium.com.

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