



**January 1, 2011**

**INFORMATION REGARDING USG's SHEETROCK® BRAND WALLBOARD**

There have been some inaccurate statements in the media about domestically made wallboard, including USG's SHEETROCK® brand wallboard. These reports have followed on the heels of publicity about problems reported with some Chinese-made wallboard. Please feel free to supply the following information to your customers to assure them that USG's wallboard products do not have the problems associated with Chinese-made drywall and that our products are of the highest quality.

***USG's SHEETROCK® is made in North America.*** United States Gypsum Company ("USG") has been manufacturing wallboard in the United States for almost 100 years.

- USG does not make wallboard in China.
- USG does not relabel or rebrand wallboard from China.
- USG does not use Chinese wallboard demolition waste in making our wallboard.

***USG's SHEETROCK® does not emit harmful sulfur gases or corrode metal.***

Testing by the United States Consumer Products Safety Commission shows that USG's wallboard does not have the problems associated with Chinese-made drywall. In response to complaints about Chinese-made drywall, the CPSC conducted multiple tests of USG's wallboard, Chinese-made wallboard, as well as other domestically manufactured wallboard. As a result of those tests, the CPSC found a direct correlation between the presence of elemental sulfur in drywall and problematic hydrogen sulfide emissions causing corrosion.<sup>1</sup> Neither of these was found with USG's wallboard or other domestically manufactured wallboard:

- USG’s drywall did not cause corrosion of copper or silver.<sup>2</sup>
- USG’s drywall did not contain elemental sulfur.<sup>3</sup>
- USG’s wallboard had low or no detectable emissions of hydrogen sulfide.<sup>4</sup>
- The same was true for other U.S.-made drywall tested.
- In contrast, Chinese drywall samples emitted hydrogen sulfide gases at rates as much as 100 times greater than U.S.-made drywall.<sup>5</sup>
- The CPSC also concluded that the presence of strontium, a naturally occurring element, in wallboard is not the cause of the problems reported with Chinese drywall.<sup>6</sup>

A recent CPSC report<sup>7</sup> shows that USG drywall, as well as other domestically manufactured drywall, had low or barely detectable emissions:

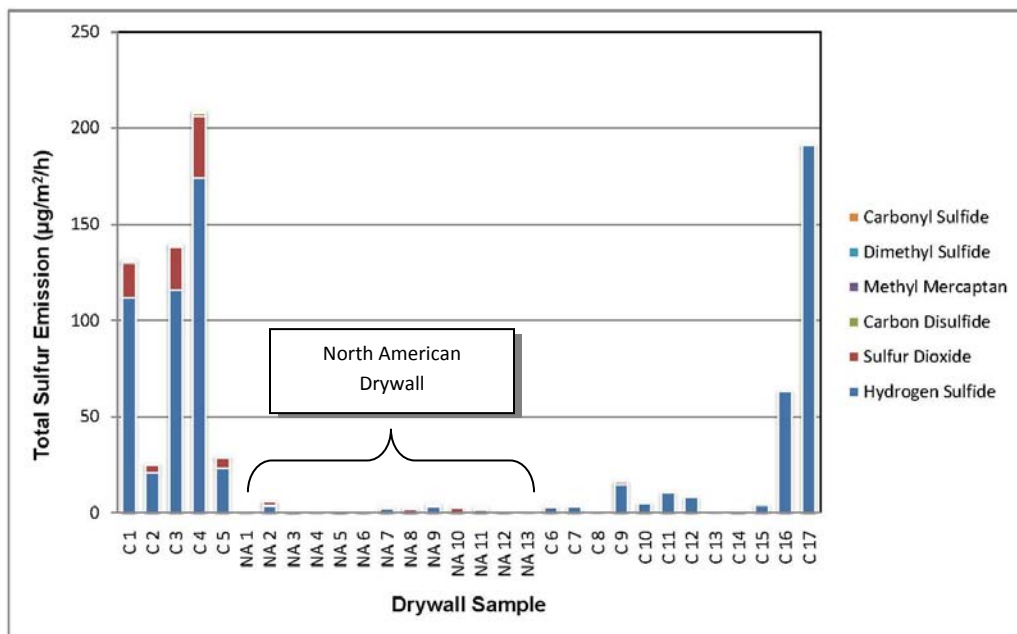


Figure 1: Sum of the LBNL measured reactive sulfur gas emission rates as mass total sulfur.

The CPSC’s findings confirm that USG’s wallboard does not have the problems associated with Chinese wallboard. In addition to testing by the CPSC, testing by an independent laboratory of VOC (volatile organic compounds) emissions shows that USG’s SHEETROCK® wallboard meets the rigorous quality requirements of the California Department of Health Services.<sup>8</sup>

***The gypsum USG uses to make its wallboard is safe and meets our quality, purity, and production standards.*** USG has been using mined gypsum for more than 90 years and synthetic gypsum for more than 20 years in making wallboard. Synthetic gypsum (also called “FGD gypsum”) is an environmentally-friendly product made through a controlled process performed at those coal-fired power plants that have invested in the equipment and technology necessary to produce synthetic gypsum. The process requires special equipment for “scrubbing” or cleansing the emissions from the plant, additional equipment to convert the cleansed emissions into wallboard grade product, rigorous product specifications, and safety testing for purity and trace metals. The result is a product that is chemically identical to mined gypsum.

As stated by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, FGD gypsum is *not* a waste product from coal combustion but, rather, is a specially-created product that “serves exactly the same function” as mined gypsum in wallboard.<sup>9</sup> Since 2000 alone, the U.S. gypsum wallboard manufacturing industry has produced the equivalent of 72,000,000,000 square feet of wallboard made with synthetic gypsum – enough to finish the interior of more than 7,000,000 American homes.

The EPA “strongly supports” the use of synthetic gypsum in making wallboard. On June 21, 2010, the EPA proposed national rules to ensure the safe disposal and management of coal combustion residuals from coal-fired power plants. These proposed rules would not apply to synthetic gypsum that is beneficially used. In its proposal, the EPA repeated its view that the use of FGD gypsum in making wallboard is safe and environmentally beneficial.<sup>10</sup>

USG conducts rigorous testing on both the synthetic gypsum and mined gypsum we use to ensure that the gypsum meets our established quality, purity, and production standards. USG also requires the synthetic gypsum supplier (the power plant) to conduct quality control testing of the shipments of synthetic gypsum to our plants. In addition, USG conducts quality control and assurance testing at our manufacturing facilities and tests both the synthetic gypsum and the mined gypsum we use for purity

and the presence of contaminants. These tests are conducted by our own research scientists as well as certified third party laboratories. Finally, synthetic gypsum and fly ash (the target of proposed EPA regulations) are completely different substances. Fly ash is not used as a substitute for gypsum because fly ash has a different chemical composition from gypsum.

For more than 100 years, safety and quality have been USG's core values. We are confident that our products are safe and of the highest quality.

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<sup>1</sup> See <http://www.cpsc.gov/library/foia/foia10/os/EHESourceMarkers.pdf>. See also, <http://www.cpsc.gov/info/drywall/may2010status.pdf> and <http://www.cpsc.gov/info/drywall/execsum0410.pdf>.

<sup>2</sup> See <http://www.cpsc.gov/library/foia/foia10/os/51homeFinal.pdf>. See also, <http://www.cpsc.gov/library/foia/foia10/os/EHESourceMarkers.pdf>,

<sup>3</sup> See <http://www.cpsc.gov/info/drywall/TabA.pdf>; <http://www.cpsc.gov/info/drywall/may2010status.pdf>; and <http://www.cpsc.gov/library/foia/foia10/os/EHESourceMarkers.pdf>, Table 6.3.

<sup>4</sup> See CPSC press release dated May 25, 2010 at <http://www.cpsc.gov/cpsc/pub/prerelease/prhtml10/10243.html>.

<sup>5</sup> See CPSC press release dated April 2, 2010 at <http://www.cpsc.gov/info/drywall/hud10068.html>.

<sup>6</sup> See <http://www.cpsc.gov/info/drywall/guidance0827.pdf>

<sup>7</sup> See <http://www.cpsc.gov/info/drywall/chamber0310.pdf>, p. 17.

<sup>8</sup> See <http://www.chpsregistry.com/live/files/certification/USG%20SHEETROCK%20Gypsum%20Panels-059-074-01A%20Lab%20Cert2.pdf>.

<sup>9</sup> See <http://www.regulations.gov/search/Regs/home.html#documentDetail?R=0900006480b06eac>.

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<sup>10</sup> See <http://www.regulations.gov/search/Regs/home.html#documentDetail?R=0900006480b06eac>, at p. 35162.