

News&Markets

Wiring in Faulty Drywall Homes Found to Be Safe

Federal safety officials have stopped recommending removal of all electrical wiring in homes with problem drywall, a change in the safety protocol that could reduce the cost of remediation.

The U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC) and the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) issued the updated remediation protocol after a new study found no evidence of a safety hazard to home electrical systems.

Last spring, officials advised homeowners with problem drywall made in China to completely remove the tainted product and replace all electrical components and wiring, gas service piping, fire suppression sprinkler systems, smoke alarms and carbon monoxide alarms.

The latest study, conducted on behalf of CPSC by Sandia National Laboratories in New Mexico, simulated long-term exposure of wiring and other electrical components to hydrogen sulfide gas, which is associated

with problem drywall. After simulating more than 40 years of corrosive conditions, Sandia staff did not observe any acute or long-term electrical safety events, such as smoking or fire. Corrosion and blackening of the exposed electrical components did occur, which was consistent with the corrosion reported by thousands of consumers.

Based on this study, federal officials concluded that long-term exposure of wiring and other electrical components to hydrogen sulfide gases does not indicate a safety hazard to a home's electrical systems.

With this change, the remediation guidance for homes with problem drywall still calls for the replacement of all:

- problem drywall;

- fire safety alarm devices, including smoke and carbon monoxide alarms;
- electrical distribution components, including receptacles, switches and circuit breakers; and
- gas service piping and fire suppression sprinkler systems.

Officials also issued a bulletin that broadens the range of installation years of affected homes to include homes where drywall was installed as late as 2009. The drywall installed in 2009 had been previously imported during the years 2006-2007 and

does not represent any new importation of problem drywall.

Thus far, most drywall manufacturers in China have refused to reimburse homeowners for their damage, despite pressure from the U.S. One Chinese company is participating in a program with 300 homeowners. **E**

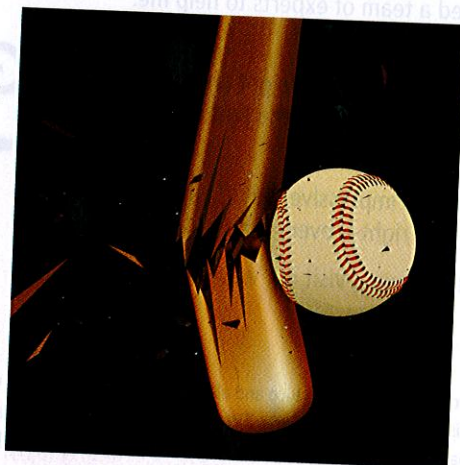


Judge Tosses New York Mets Fan's Broken-Bat Lawsuit

A judge has thrown out a New York Mets fan's lawsuit against the team and Major League Baseball over a bat that broke and flew into his face in the former Shea Stadium's stands.

A judge dismissed the case earlier this month. James Falzon sued last summer over the August 2007 incident.

Falzon's lawyer says he plans to appeal. A lawyer for the team and league had no immediate comment. Falzon has a separate lawsuit that's still ongoing against the bat's makers. His suit follows years of discussion of the safety of maple bats. **E**



New York Senators Push to Toughen Texting at Wheel Law

New York's Senate Republicans promise to push legislation that would allow police to stop and ticket motorists for texting while driving.

Using a portable electronic device while at the wheel of a moving vehicle in New York is currently a secondary offense, which means that a person can't be pulled over solely for driving while texting. Instead, it must be tacked on to another offense like speeding.

Legislation sponsored by a dozen Republicans, who have majority control of that chamber, would upgrade it to a primary offense.

A group of Senate Democrats has introduced a similar bill. A companion measure is pending in the Assembly.

The American Automobile Association says driver distraction lasting more than two seconds doubles the risk of a crash. **E**

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