

SOLID WASTE MANAGEMENT DEPARTMENT
POLICY STATEMENT
REGARDING THE DISPOSAL OF
CHINESE DRYWALL

A number of problems involving the use of Chinese drywall in homes constructed over the past several years have resulted in the generation of several thousand tons of material in Hillsborough County that has been earmarked for disposal. The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), the Florida Department of Environmental Protection (FDEP) as well as the Florida Department of Health (FDH) recommend proper disposal of this material in a Class I landfill that has an active gas collection system. In addition, these agencies continue to evaluate elevated levels of strontium, iron and sulfur that is present in Chinese drywall material and is either absent or minimal in U.S drywall. The EPA is continuing to work with its federal and state partners to respond to this issue.

Jones Edmunds (landfill Consultants) considered the impact of accepting Chinese drywall in large quantities or dedicated loads of gypsum wallboard at the Southeast County Landfill. The primary concern is that large quantities will produce “hydrogen sulfide” (H₂S) as it decomposes under anaerobic conditions. Hydrogen sulfide when mixed with landfill gas (methane) can have negative effects including:

A landfill (disposal) cell that does not have an active gas collection system in place may experience excessive odors (strong rotten egg smell) at low concentrations causing potential air emission problems.

Corrosion of gas recovery equipment and landfill equipment at high concentrations resulting in increased maintenance and replacement cost to the County.

Increased emissions of sulfur oxides from landfill gas flaring/burning could result in having to purchase expensive sulfur emissions control equipment to meet regulatory requirement.

The introduction of hydrogen sulfide generating materials into the Southeast County Landfill must be kept to a minimum to provide high quality landfill gas, reduce odor emissions from the landfill, avoid future landfill gas or flare emissions regulatory issues and minimize exposure of hydrogen sulfide to landfill staff based on potential health effects. In addition, the unknown impacts of elevated strontium, iron and sulfur could impact emissions as well as negatively impact landfill leachate treatment. Therefore, the SWMD has determined that it is not in the best interest of Hillsborough County to accept Chinese drywall in the Southeast County landfill.

For additional information concerning Chinese Drywall, please visit the following links:

U.S. Consumer Products Safety Commissions
www.cpsc.gov/info/drywall/index.html

U.S. Environmental Protection Commission
www.epa.gov/oswer/docs/chinesedrywall.pdf

Florida Department of Health
www.doh.state.fl.us/environment/community/indoor-air/drywall.html