

Chinese Drywall: Helpful Tips for Homeowners

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HBA-GNO takes no position as to whether you should leave your home, but if you do leave, we recommend that you keep your AC system running as low as 68 degrees. Do not turn off the AC system; heat and humidity has been shown to exacerbate the off-gassing problem. AC systems are designed to lower both heat and humidity. If you choose to stay in your home until a formal remediation process takes place, the following recommendations may lower the adverse impact to the occupants and the home:

1. Lower thermostat to 68 degrees. Keep home cool and low in humidity.
2. Run bathroom vents during baths and showers to remove heat and humidity, 20 minutes before use and 1 hour after use.
3. Install fresh air into air return. This will help to neutralize the off-gassing and introduce more oxygen to the home. Due to energy requirements in building codes, homes are built more air tight, which causes the inside air to be recycled and becomes stale. To introduce fresh air to a home, installation of a 6-inch pipe from the air return through the wall or attic to outside air, will accomplish this. Also, devices exist that have AC-activated flaps to close when the AC is not running. The device is placed in the air return so that the AC can remove humidity introduced to the home from outside. HVAC contractors or builders can assist with this item.
4. Clean your coils every 3 months. A qualified HVAC contractor can do this to remove the soot build-up on the copper coils. The soot from the off-gassing can cause the aluminum and copper to electrolyses, causing a pinhole leak and causing the system to leak Freon and fail.
5. If you replace coils, use **coated** coils.
6. Install a charcoal or the best air return filter that you can find; change it weekly. This can capture the off-gas. Cleaning or changing it regularly can slow the build-up on the copper coils.
7. Clean brass and copper in the home with Tarnix as soot builds up. Record how quickly the soot builds. Note any deterioration of metal.
8. Vacuum soot weekly off of electronics in TVs, computers, etc. Record how quickly soot builds up. Heat held by the soot can cause thin copper wiring to fail.
9. Ground wiring in outlets and switches can survive the soot for a time. Check them every 6 months.
10. Check smoke alarms every week by pressing alarm button. They may be removed and vacuumed out.
11. Do not open windows unless humidity levels outside are below 60% and temperature is in the 50s to 60s.
12. Air out furniture and fabrics before installing new filter and fresh air induction.
Clean carpet and clothes regularly and store clothes not used somewhere other than inside the home.

We hope that these twelve tips assist those home owners who, while evaluating permanent remediation options for tainted Chinese drywall, must nevertheless continue to either live in their homes or keep the home in operation.