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PRACTICE AREAS

Workers Compensation

Personal Injury

Motor Vehicle Accidents

Wrongful Death

Chinese Drywall Claims Resulting in Personal Injury Lawsuits

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Beginning in 2004, drywall manufactured in China was imported to the United States and installed primarily in the walls of houses in the South. The drywall was used in many homes and buildings in New Orleans during the efforts to rebuild after Hurricane Katrina.

Unfortunately, the Chinese drywall was defective and breaks down in hot, humid weather, emitting noxious fumes which smell like rotten eggs. The emissions can cause copper and other metal surfaces, such as pipes and wires, to turn black and powdery and also irritate the respiratory tracts of residents, ranging from sinus problems, asthma and nosebleeds.

As discussed in this Wall Street Journal [blog post](#), lawsuits that have been filed against the Chinese drywall manufacturers are increasingly being resolved in favor of the homeowners. For example, 7 Virginia families obtained a \$2.6 million dollar judgment in one case and more recently, a federal judge in Louisiana [ruled](#) in favor of a Louisiana family:

(The judge) awarded the Hernandez family \$164,000 for the costs of pulling out the drywall—known for emitting a ‘rotten egg’ odor—and replacing the wiring, plumbing and appliances that had been ruined. They’ll also be reimbursed by Knauf Plasterboard Tianjin Co. Ltd, known as KPT, for legal and other fees.

On the heels of that ruling, as reported in a News-press.com [article](#), Knauf has approached builders in several states and offered to settle pending Chinese drywall lawsuits:

Knauf is offering \$18 or \$19 per square foot, said Allison Grant, a Boca



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Raton attorney who represents numerous drywall cases in Cape Coral and about 500 drywall homeowners across Florida.

“Knauf is trying to squeeze out the homeowner and go straight to the builder,” Grant said. One reason may be that the builders’ cost to fix the drywall will be less than a homeowner’s after hiring a contractor.

If it’s true that Knauf is attempting to bypass the homeowners in an effort to reduce their costs and liability, it’s certainly a sad state of affairs. The injured homeowners who are suffering both physically and monetarily, through no fault of their own, certainly deserve better than that.

Hopefully the judges presiding over the cases pending in the various courts will see to it that the homeowners—those who have clearly suffered the most due to the defective drywall—will be adequately compensated for their losses and injuries.

Howard Ankin of Ankin Law Office LLC (www.ankinlaw.com) specializes in [workers’ compensation](#) and [personal injury law](#). Mr. Ankin can be reached at (312) 346-8780 and howard@ankinlaw.com.