

CITY OF BALTIMORE

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HEALTH DEPARTMENT

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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HEALTH ADVISORY

Baltimore City Health Department Warns Of Toxic Pesticide Illegally Sold In City

BALTIMORE, MD (September 29, 2009) – The Baltimore City Health Department urges City residents to avoid using *Miracle Chalk*, also known as *Miraculous Chalk* and *Chinese Chalk*, a highly toxic pesticide which is mostly made in China and sold illegally in Baltimore City. The Health Department recently discovered the sale of such products at a local specialty store.

Miracle Chalk, *Miraculous Chalk*, and *Chinese Chalk* are sold in stores or on the street for about \$1 a box. It is touted as an insecticide to eliminate roach infestations. Users are instructed to rub the product over household surfaces. This insecticide chalk is easily mistaken for regular chalk, which children often take in their hands, write with and put in their mouths.

The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) found that the active ingredient in this chalk is a chemical called deltamethrin, which is one of the most toxic pesticides of its kind. Exposure to this product can cause severe health effects, including vomiting, stomach pains, convulsions, tremors and loss of consciousness. Serious allergic reactions are also possible.

Samples of the product have been forwarded to both the EPA and the Maryland Department of Agriculture, which issued a Stop Sale and disposal instructions. All information collected by the state's inspector has been forwarded to EPA Region 3 for review and possible enforcement action.

Due to the high toxicity of this product and the likelihood that children will play with it, the Health Department advises residents to not purchase such products. If you have this product in your home, seal it in a plastic bag and discard it in a container away from children.



To obtain high resolution photos of the seized product, e-mail Brian Schleiter at mediahealth@baltimorecity.gov. For more information about Chinese Chalk, visit the EPA Website at <http://www.epa.gov/opp00001/health/illegalproducts/chalk.htm>.

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