

Whole-Structure Fumigation with Vikane® gas fumigant: What California Homeowners Need to Know

Drywood termites and termite damage can threaten the integrity of your largest investment — your home. What do you do when your pest management professional tells you that your home needs to be fumigated for drywood termites? Do not worry — you are not alone.

Millions of homeowners battle termite infestations every year, and many of their homes are treated by whole-structure fumigation with Vikane® gas fumigant.

The following answers to common questions about structural fumigation will provide peace of mind as you prepare your home for fumigation with Vikane, the most effective way to eliminate drywood termites.

What is the fumigation process?

The average fumigation is about 24 hours, followed by a minimum aeration period of 12 hours. Your professional fumigator tents your home with large tarps, prepares the interior, seals the tarps, and releases a warning agent (chloropicrin) into the structure. Then, your fumigator introduces Vikane through a special hose attached to a fumigant cylinder located outside your home.

Contained in the structure for a predetermined time, the fumigant penetrates deep into wood to eliminate drywood termites. After the fumigation is complete, your fumigator aerates and certifies the fumigant from your home, allowing you and your family to re-enter. Strategic placement of fans inside the structure draws fresh air through inlets placed in the tarps and aerates Vikane and the warning agent (chloropicrin) through ducting while tarps remain on the building.

What is Vikane® gas fumigant?

Vikane is a colorless, odorless gas that is non-detectable by people during fumigation, as well as non-staining, non-corrosive and non-flammable. As a gas, Vikane dissipates into the atmosphere and does not deplete the ozone.

What is chloropicrin?

Chloropicrin, a warning agent, is a colorless liquid with a strong odor, causing tearing of the eyes and throat irritation when used at low concentrations. Chloropicrin serves as a deterrent from early or accidental entry into a structure under fumigation. At the end of the fumigation, your fumigator aerates both chloropicrin and Vikane from the structure before allowing you to re-enter your home.

Did you know...?

Millions of homeowners battle termite infestations every year!

What precautions are taken to help ensure my family's safety?

Your fumigator takes many precautions to help ensure the safety of you, your family, your pets and property before, during and after the fumigation process. For example, your licensed fumigator will:

- Release chloropicrin, the warning agent used with Vikane, to warn anyone against entry into the structure.
- Secure the doors on your home through the use of interior locks and additional locking devices.
- Use sophisticated equipment to detect when Vikane has aerated and the home is clear for re-entry.



Here is What You Need to Do

What do I need to do to prepare for fumigation with Vikane® gas fumigant?

In addition to the work performed by your fumigator, it is your responsibility to help prepare your home for the fumigation. Taking the following steps prior to fumigation helps ensure its success, resulting in the elimination of drywood termites from your home. Check with your fumigator for additional home preparation information.

The Day Before Fumigation

- Water the soil up to 18 inches from the outer walls of your home to protect outdoor plants and shrubs.
- Cut back foliage, shrubbery and landscaping at least 18 inches from the structure to allow room for the tarps.
- Remember to make arrangements for overnight accommodations for you and your pets, as the fumigation will typically take two days.
- Please keep in mind the fumigation may need to be rescheduled if the weather is uncooperative. High winds and rain may hinder a fumigation and cause potential danger to fumigators.

The Day of Fumigation

- Remove all plants from your home, including those on outdoor patios.
- Evacuate all people and pets from the structure.
- Remove mattresses completely enveloped in plastic, such as baby mattresses with waterproof covers, or remove or open the covers.
- Remove or double-bag any food, feed, drugs (including tobacco products) and medicinals in special Nylofume bags your fumigator provides. You do not need to bag or remove items in plastic, glass, or metal bottles, cans or jars with the original manufacturer's seal intact (see sidebar).
- Seal the Nylofume bags one at a time by twisting the tops, or folding down and sealing with tape, twisty ties, string or rubber bands. **DO NOT TIE THE BAGS IN A KNOT.** Your fumigator can provide special instructions on proper bagging procedures for you.
- Double-bag cold and frozen foods and leave them in the refrigerator and freezer. Remove shelves from the refrigerator and freezer to make it easier to stack the bags inside.
- Be sure to remove or double-bag anything that will be ingested (medicine, spices, etc.).

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Always read and follow label directions.

After The Fumigation

- It is **unnecessary** to wash dishes, linens, clothing, etc., as Vikane is a gas and will dissipate from the structure.
- Remember, once your fumigation is complete, all termites in your structure should be eliminated.

If you have any questions about how to prepare your home for fumigation, please contact your fumigator.

Ask your fumigator to help you determine additional items that need to be double-bagged or removed prior to fumigation. A good rule of thumb is "When in doubt, take it out." Here are some examples.

Double-bag or remove these items:

- Chips, pasta, rice and other foods packaged in plastic bags
- Cereals, crackers and other foods packaged in cardboard boxes (even if the boxes have never been opened)
- Spices, salt and pepper shakers, and other items where the seal has been broken
- Eggs
- Butter, cream cheese and any other items stored in a resealed container, including items stored in Tupperware containers
- Fruits and vegetables
- Bags of pet food and bird seed, as well as opened cans

You DO NOT need to bag or remove these items:

- Ice and water
- Unopened cans (including home-canned goods)
- Cosmetics, such as lipstick; shampoo, soaps
- Dental hygiene products (including toothpaste, mouthwash, dental adhesives, and dental whitening products)
- All externally applied lotions and ointments
- Unopened soda cans and glass bottles
- Unopened bottles of liquor and wine (stored horizontally)

