

What You Need to Know About Termites, Fumigation and Tile Roofs



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While fumigation is an initial solution, it does not combat re-infestations. Localized treatments involve the injection of termiticides directly into the infested channels of the timbers, as well as the topical application of chemicals. This is commonly known as “drill and treatment.” This process not only controls the colony itself, but also provides a barrier against re-infestations in the specific area. It is then followed up with an injection of Drione to all accessible attic areas. This is performed to minimize re-infestations.

Without the benefits of periodic inspections and treatments, the potential for dry wood termites and subsequent inspection almost always results in a recommendation for fumigation. When termite infestations are not identified and controlled from the exterior and infestations are permitted to enter a structure's interior, they will swarm and re-infest attic areas and the interior; this is usually when a fumigation is recommended. It is important to understand that fumigation does not affect existing subterranean termites, fungus, or dry rot conditions.

Dry wood termite swarming season occurs each year around September and October. They will swarm and re-infest to start new colonies; a common misconception is that during the dry wood termite swarming periods, the alates or winged termites (swarmers) fly from one area to another. In fact, they transport themselves through thermal

guidance provided by the prevailing air currents. This explains why fumigation tarps can be removed and the same day new colonies can swarm and re-infest the immediate areas or relocate in the same susceptible areas of adjoining or adjacent structures.

We live in Southern California. Dry wood termites reproduce here. The goal should be, when possible, to perform localized treatments to control the infestations to prevent structural damage. Take the high cost of fumigation and apply that savings to any recommended repairs.

Once identification of infestations and structure damage is performed, recommendations can be made to remove the infected wood material from the property and replace with new, leaving the structure free and clear of active infestations. However, concerned parties will be required to work with a structural pest control company with a construction background or licensed as a general contractor. Warranties and certifications can be issued stating that the property is free and clear of active infestations to lenders for escrow.

A fumigation process requires workers to walk and drag heavy tarps across tile roofs; tile roofs are not designed to be walked upon. When fumigation workers carry heavy tarps and walk on the roof, they can damage the tile roof shingles and puncture holes in the felt membranes underlayment (which is applied over the plywood sheathing under the tile). Once holes are punc-

tured in the felt paper, you must remove the tiles and replace the felt underlayment. The felt underlayment paper is for waterproofing the plywood sheathing and is the life of the roof which protects the interior of a structure from moisture. The purpose of the tile is to protect the felt membrane from the elements.

Replacing the broken tile will not correct leaks when the felt paper is damaged. You must remove the tile, replace the damaged felt underlayment and reinstall the tile to correct active leaks.

Fumigations can create long-term roofing problems after your escrow has already closed. Unfortunately, this problem has become a common occurrence in the industry. Roof releases are required to be signed by the owner or agent of the property, which releases companies from any roof damage and liability exposure that may be caused through the fumigation process. It is necessary to emphasize tile roofs are not designed to be walked upon.

The interest of the responsible parties is best served by investigating alternative methods to fumigations by competent people who are qualified and capable to issue necessary warranties and certifications on all work performed. **A.N.**

About the Author:

Tony Angelo is the CEO and owner of Angelo Termite & Construction Company. If you have questions or concerns about the roof of your apartment building, you can contact him at info@AngeloTermite.com or (800) 589-8809.

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