PEST TREATMENT — GUIDE

Fumigation explained for households

Understand whole-structure gas treatment, preparation and the questions to ask before leaving your home.

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Fumigation uses a gas to reach pests within a sealed treatment area. It is different from a surface spray, a fogger or heat treatment. Ask the provider to name the pest and explain why a treatment that covers the whole structure is needed.

UC IPM describes whole-structure fumigation as an option for drywood termites. It can reach infestations hidden from view. That does not mean every termite problem needs fumigation. Subterranean termites need a plan that addresses their access from soil.

Compare alternatives after inspection

Ask whether local treatment is realistic and what evidence supports it. Ask whether heat is an option and how difficult areas would be monitored. UC IPM discusses limits to local treatments and problems with heating some parts of a structure. A recommendation should follow the findings, not simply the equipment a provider owns.

Get a written preparation plan

The fumigator should explain which people, animals, plants and belongings must leave, what needs special packing, and how access will be secured. Ask about food, medicines, pet supplies, aquariums and items in attached spaces. Do not assume ordinary storage containers meet the instructions.

Ask who will coordinate with the property manager and occupants of connected units. Identify who handles utilities and any external equipment. Follow the operator's written instructions and the product label. Never enter to retrieve a forgotten item during treatment.

Ask about return to the building

UC IPM says occupants, pets and plants must leave during fumigation and aeration. Ask who will measure conditions, confirm clearance and tell you that you may return. Do not use a smell test, an elapsed-time guess or a neighbour's experience as permission to re-enter.

Request the clearance record and keep it with the treatment report. Ask what to do if access is delayed. Arrange somewhere suitable for your household and animals to stay until the operator authorizes return.

Compare the whole cost

HomeGuide lists USD $2,000 to $8,000 for gas fumigation of an average home, checked 2026-11-10. The same source lists USD $1 to $4 per square foot. These are US planning ranges. Ask how the provider measures your building and which charges are included. They do

not establish a Canadian price.

Budget separately for accommodation and any packing, repairs or other work excluded from the quote. Fumigation does not repair damaged wood. Ask what follow-up will check for new activity and whether the contract includes any continuing protection.

Sources

- Drywood Termites, UC Statewide IPM Program. Fetched and checked 2026-11-10.
- Termites: How to Identify and Control Them | US EPA. Fetched and checked 2026-11-10.
- How Much Does Termite Treatment Cost? (2026). HomeGuide, commercial US cost guide. Fetched and checked 2026-11-10.

Frequently asked questions

Is fumigation the same as heat treatment?

No. Fumigation uses gas. Heat uses temperature. Ask for a written explanation of the method proposed for your pest.