

Fumigation

U P D A T E



Condo Fumigation Overcomes Architectural Challenges

The Landing condominium in Coronado, Calif., is a distinctive five-story, 3.5 million-cubic-foot building with 92 units. Built in 1986, the structure became infested with drywood termites, which heat and localized spot treatments failed to control. In late 2009, the building management decided fumigation was necessary and called in several companies to inspect and provide a fumigation recommendation.

In January, Payne Pest Management in San Diego was chosen to handle the job. Owner Willie Payne brought in Statewide Fumigation in Escondido, Calif., to fumigate the building.

“Because The Landing has such a distinct architecture and unique configuration, we started prepping the building a month in advance,” Payne said. “This job required working hand in hand with the landscapers, the maintenance crew and building managers.”

Distinct features

One unique feature at The Landing is a courtyard inside the center of the structure filled with a variety of plants, flowers and other exotic vegetation. To ensure plants would not be affected by the fumigation, Payne and the team at Statewide worked closely with the building’s landscaping crew.

“There were a lot of palm trees, lush

vegetation and exotic flowers and grasses we had to be very careful about,” said fumigation manager Barry Einstoss, who operates the Statewide Fumigation National City office. “There also was a French drain beneath the courtyard that posed a challenge.”

The French drain — a ditch covered with gravel — ran along a sidewalk on the interior, so extra time and care was needed to seal off the drain before the fumigation. Only a thin layer of gravel covered the French drain, so Einstoss and his team decided to tarp and sandbag the drainage system, which was almost 500 feet long.

“We had to place separate tarps over the drains and sandbags over the tarps,” Einstoss explained. “We had to make sure that no gas would pass through the gravel and into the drains and sewage system.”

Another challenge was the steepness and unevenness of the roof. “The roof was staggered. While some areas were flat, others were peaked,” Einstoss said. “Even though there were flat areas on the roof, the crew members wore their fall protection at all times for added safety.”

Communication to residents

Payne conducted four town hall meetings with the residents to explain the fumigation process.

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“We showed them how to bag their food, told them what needed to be removed, and talked about what they could expect before, during and after the fumigation,” Payne explained.

He also met with the board and homeowners’ association to share this information.

Because The Landing is a vacation home for roughly 20 percent of the residents, members of the Payne Pest Management crew bagged food, at an additional charge, using Nylofume® bags for the condo owners who could not be there before the fumigation.

Fumigation preparations

Five days before the fumigation, Statewide Fumigation sent a team to the site to assess and prep the roof, which required additional work because of its size and uneven shape. They taped sharp corners or added carpet pads where necessary. Tarps were placed on the roof, along with several forms of fall protection. They also met with the maintenance crew and the management team to make sure they had access to all of the rooms.

“We took the time to plan and prep, so we knew what to expect,” Einstoss said. “We visited the site numerous times beforehand, so we wouldn’t have any issues during the fumigation.”

The Statewide Fumigation crew arrived at the site about 7 a.m. March 22. One team started spreading sandbags

around the structure, while the roof crew prepared the tarps. Another team went into the structure to make sure the food and medicinals were bagged properly and helped take out all the plants still inside. They opened all operable windows and doors, and secondary locks were used on the entrance doors of each of the 92 units, as well as the exterior doors to the building common areas. Tarps were placed and seams clamped, completing the preparations at 4:30 p.m.

About 5 p.m., they released the chloropicrin, and about 45 minutes later, they began introducing Vikane® gas fumigant into the structure. Twelve cylinders of Vikane were used to fumigate the entire building. Statewide Fumigation monitored the structure with a Fumiscope throughout the night and into the next day from an on-site mobile home used as the control center.

Vikane was selected based on its reliability. “I’ve never considered using an alternate product, because our company is not assured of the performance of other materials out on the market right now,” Einstoss explained. “In the past 30 years, I’ve used nothing but Vikane.”

Ready for re-entry

At 2 p.m. March 23, the Statewide Fumigation team installed and turned on the Tarpaulin Removal Aeration Plan (TRAP) aeration fans to start the initial aeration process. They removed the sandbags, unclipped the seams and removed the tarps.

Around 4 p.m., with all exterior doors and windows opened, Einstoss and his crew began opening interior doors to all the units during the initial one-hour active aeration period. After the one-hour active aeration period, they secured exterior doors of the building, but left the interior entrance doors for each unit open until 8 p.m. while they cleaned the job site.

Once Einstoss was satisfied that the day’s activities were done correctly, they locked all the windows, entrance doors to all units, and exterior doors, and left by 9:30 p.m.

At 7 a.m. March 24, three Statewide Branch 1 licensees opened the structure for a final reading with Spectros *Explor*IR gas analyzers to confirm concentrations of Vikane were 1 ppm or less in each room of every unit before the structure was reopened to the residents at noon.

“The job was a complete success,” Einstoss said. “Other companies have tried to treat the property with alternate methods, but those methods eventually failed. We did what we came to do, and we did it well.”

