



**ENSYSTEX**

# Fume out

A Florida fumigation company relies on Ensysstex for products and service

Operating a fumigation-only business isn't easy. In fact, many pest control companies don't do fumigation because of the expense – labor and insurance, to name two. But that hasn't deterred Jackie Valencia, owner of FumeOut in Fort Pierce, Fla.

"Dad told me I was crazy to start this business," she says. "There's lot of labor involved, ground- and aerial-related insurance, and many more regulations and training requirements than a standard pest control company would have to abide by."

In 2001, Valencia's father, James Hamill, started WipeOut Pest & Termites, and in 2011 Jackie Valencia started StandOut Lawn & Garden, a division of WipeOut. In

October 2013, she left her father's company – which is also a client of Ensysstex, purchasing lawn and ornamental products, as well as insecticides and rodenticides – to start FumeOut. One of her goals was to offer other pest control companies fumigation services as part of a wholesale approach. Many older communities with older buildings in the Fort Pierce area have problems with drywood termites. During the past few years, Valencia has noticed the number

**Jackie Valencia**



**Valencia with one of her two crews.**

of real-estate transactions increase. As a result, real-estate companies are requiring pest control companies treat homes and buildings before new owners move in.

Bed bugs are another targeted pest for Valencia.

"I've seen a room stripped top to bottom and still saw bed bugs after the treatment because a resident didn't take every possible precaution," she says. "We use fumigation for bed bugs because a PMP has to rely too much on the customer to help. Fumigation is the best because it goes through everything – every void – and there's no residual left. If there's a termite swarm in an attic, fumigation is the way to go because the gas goes where sprays and technicians can't."

Valencia has fumigated residential homes, commercial buildings, churches, apartment buildings, boats, a furniture store and a semi-trailer truck. The driver of the truck picked up bed bugs at a truck stop. The amount of gas used for a fumigation project is based on the cubic footage of the structure or

building, so one cylinder of Zythor (sulfuryl fluoride) can last as many as 10 houses or one church.

The standard length of time for a fumigation project is 24 to 48 hours. In colder temperatures, Valencia likes to fumigate on the longer end of that range. Typically, homeowners leave their house by 9 a.m. the day of treatment.

"I'm not there to advertise, so we have minimally marked trucks," she says. "Other pest control companies want me to help save their businesses. I do this by offering their clients a service they need when these other companies don't have the license to offer the service themselves, which helps prevent other full-service companies from taking away their customers."

When fumigating, Valencia runs a hose from the cylinder containing the Zythor – a colorless, odorless gas – into the structure via a window or

garage door and shoots the gas. The cylinder sits on a scale, which shows how much gas is being used. Many factors are considered on every job to calculate how quickly to release the gas: wind speed, seals, tarps, ground conditions. An average job takes 15 to 20 minutes to shoot the gas. The structures typically are vacated for three days and two nights.

Scheduling crews can be tricky because Valencia factors in logistics, compliance and setup and teardown time. Currently, she has two full-time crews and expects a third to be added this month. She has two trucks that pull trailers, one box truck and an aerial boom lift.

Even though Valencia is fumigating primarily for drywood termites (three out of four fumigations are for termites) and bed bugs, she has done jobs to control powderpost beetles, rodents, Formosan termites and the tree termite. Zythor, which is

approved by individual states – Florida in 2004 and California in 2006, for example – is also effective for treating clothes moths, German cockroaches and rodents,.

Valencia purchases the nonflammable Zythor – a restricted-use pesticide because of inhalation toxicity – once a week, so she doesn't have to store the 5-ft.-tall, 250-lb. cylinders on site, which is convenient. She uses about four cylinders a week. Each one costs about \$1,400. She has used Zythor – which doesn't stain or corrode; it dissipates into the atmosphere – since she started her company.

Ensystex has a distribution location in Fort Pierce, so Valencia can buy clamps, sand snakes and other fumigation supplies that she needs.

"If Ensystex doesn't have it, they'll get it for you," she says. "Their customer service is amazing. Any time I have a problem, it's



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a phone call and an immediate response."

One problem Valencia had, which was actually a good problem to have, was when she was approached to do the biggest job FumeOut had ever done – a five-story, 1-million-cu.-ft. condo right on the ocean. Ensystex sales representative Jeff Shelton, who had worked in fumigation before, came out to the job to give Valencia the support she needed.

"That was the best," she says. "He made sure all our questions were answered."

A FumeOut crew prepares an apartment complex for fumigation.





# ENSYSTEX

## California fumigating

PMP relies on Ensystem for Zythor and equipment calibration

Throughout his career, Jaime Rivas has fumigated more than 20,000 properties, about 90 percent of them residential. The president and CEO of Buena Park, Calif.-based Kal Fume runs a small company – \$1.3 million in revenue, 16 employees and six trucks, plus fumigation equipment such as tarps and clips. About 95 percent of Kal Fume's work is fumigation. The rest is termite work.

Rivas, who has been in industry since 1977, worked for three companies from 1977 to 1989, when one big customer decided not to use the company he was working for and offered him work. It was a building contractor who uses fumigation regularly.

"I'm still doing work for him all these years later," says Rivas, an active member of the Pest Control Operators of California (PCOC) organization since 1982.

Kal Fume, which Rivas started in 2000, services Los Angeles, Orange, San Bernardino and Riverside counties. Rivas controls drywood termites mostly. He also treats for powderpost beetles, but that's rare. Rivas primarily uses Zythor, a sulfuryl fluoride gas, to control termites and beetles. He was using another product until about five years ago, when he made the switch to Zythor. He has stuck with it mainly because of price.

"Ensystem was getting a better deal for me," he says.

Kal Fume, which is state licensed and bonded, fumigates between 30 and 40 houses a week, and Rivas rarely returns to the same house to re-treat. Out of 1,500 homes a year, Rivas says Kal Fume has gone back to about 10 for one reason or another.

Ensystem typically delivers Zythor cylinders once a week and sometimes twice a week. Rivas purchases about 30 cylinders a month or close to 400 cylinders a year. During the calendar year, January and February are slow because the weather isn't as conducive to drywood termite activity. March through October



Almost all of Kal Fume's work is fumigation.

is busy, signified by Rivas ordering 10 cylinders of Zythor a week on average. Because Rivas' business is integrally linked to the real-estate market – he has strong relationships with Realtors who give him work – Kal Fume fumigates before a transaction is closed and the new homeowners move in.

A typical fumigation lasts 48 hours from start to finish, during which time the homeowners leave their house. Rivas says nearby residents know what's going on because they're familiar with fumigation.

"Occasionally we get someone who asks what we're doing," he says.

When treating for drywood termites, Rivas chooses fumigation over other treatment methods because

it treats every corner of a house.

"Fumigation is a guarantee," he says. "We'll go back free of charge if a homeowner has termites after we fumigate. Local applications of pesticides only treat areas you can reach. So, for example, homeowners can't see termites if they're inside the wall, but fumigation treats that."

Furthermore, the effectiveness of sulfuryl fluoride gas (Zythor) is confirmed by more than 40 years of university research, practical use and published reports. It's a treatment that penetrates an entire structure, completely eliminating termites, even in areas not accessible to spot treatments. Unlike spot treatments, which depend on an applicator's ability to accurately locate and reach each infestation to be successful, fumigation with sulfuryl fluoride eliminates all infestations throughout the structure with one application.

"It's a treatment customers can feel

confident about," Rivas says.

Rivas has been happy with Ensystex's service, products and especially its prices. Normally, he doesn't call the company for help on a job, but he relies on it to calibrate his equipment. Ensystex

has provided Rivas with additional testing equipment to make sure the homes he treats are clear of fumigant. The company once delivered a large quantity of Zythor immediately when Rivas needed it to complete a large condo job.

"If I have questions, there's always someone there to answer them," he says. "If I need my equipment calibrated, I call them up, and they're right on it."

**Kal Fume also treats boats.**



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