

The Virgin Islands Consortium

Terminix Used Poisonous Pesticide On St. Croix, EPA Issues Warning

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Terminix, one of the territory's most prominent pesticide companies, has found itself in a lot of trouble following the revelation that [it was the company](#) responsible for fumigating an apartment at a luxury condominium in St. John with pesticides that caused a Delaware family vacationing at the same place earlier this month to become critically ill. Now, new reports show Terminix has also used the pesticide on locations in St. Croix.

The pesticide has been identified as Meth-O-Gas, which contains the heavily restricted methyl bromide, the chemical at the heart of the controversy.

A Stop Use Order issued to Terminix by the Department of Planning and Natural Resources (DPNR) on Tuesday revealed that the company used the restricted product on three separate occasions on St. Croix last year: on July 15, 2014 the company fumigated a 20-foot container containing dry lumber at an undisclosed location on St. Croix. A residence located at 143 Shoys was fumigated on Nov. 26, 2014, and on Dec. 19, 2014, Terminix fumigated kitchen and cabinets at the Armory building on St. Croix.

The Stop Use Order also made known that Terminix did not follow the proper guidelines provided by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), which includes the sealing of the entire structure as the pesticide is being applied. The violation is upon another one of using a product not approved for use in residential buildings.

The EPA has also issued a warning about the use of pesticides in the U.S. Virgin Islands, and said that its investigations, along with DPNR's, continues.

"The EPA is working closely with the U.S. Virgin Islands government to investigate an incident of suspected exposure to methyl bromide reported on March 20, 2015," the EPA said in a statement released to media. "Paramedics responded to a call that four people staying at the Sirenusa Condominium Resort in St. John became ill. An investigation by the EPA and the Virgin Islands Department of Planning and Natural Resources is ongoing and includes air monitoring and environmental sampling."

According to DPNR spokesman Jamal Nielsen, the pesticide containing methyl bromide was previously purchased in Puerto Rico, however the Stop Use Order gave Terminix until the end of Tuesday to provide documentation revealing any other location within the territory the product was purchased.

Terminix must also quarantine all pesticides containing methyl bromide in a secure location, according to the Stop Use Order.

According to the product's [overview page](#), Meth-O-Gas is "100% methyl bromide and is a restricted use commodity fumigant/pesticide."

The EPA release goes on to say that "restricted-use pesticides and certified applicators must comply with all regulatory requirements for the use of these products," something Terminix allegedly did not do when applying the product.

Meth-O-Gas is described as a product "typically used for 'Critical Use Exemption' (CUE) applications and 'Quarantine and Pre-shipment' (QPS) treatments of exported wood packaging materials. But, it may also be used for other QPS treatments if the required application rate and treatment site is consistent with the treatment tables in the product label."

Members of the Esmond family are currently being treated at a stateside hospital, and are listed in critical but stable condition.

Governor Mapp issued a statement about the incident earlier this week.

"The people of the U.S. Virgin Islands pray for the full recovery of the Esmond family," he said. "We will continue to do all that is possible to determine how this unprecedented event occurred, and to prevent it from ever happening in the future. Our residents and

visitors can remain confident in the quality and readiness of our healthcare services. For that, we are thankful."

To read the EPA's pesticide use warning document, click [here](#).

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