

Family sues Terminix; son unable to walk after fumigation

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A light-colored female Formosan termite, left, exhibiting mating behavior with the darker male Asian termite in Florida.
(Photo: AP)

Last month, Peyton McCaughey's family called in fumigators to deal with the humdrum problem of termites. Today, the 10-year-old boy has lost 90% of his motor skills, and state investigators in Florida say it's because of the chemicals used in the fumigation, reports NBC News.

The boy's parents this week sued Terminix and a subcontractor named Sunland, alleging shoddy practices, reports TCPalm.

Peyton "sustained a catastrophic brain injury" because the fumigators "failed to properly make certain" that the home was safe for the family to re-enter, according to the complaint.

The boy, his sister, his parents, and his grandmother all quickly became sick, but Peyton was the worst with slurred speech and muscle spasms.

Everyone else recovered, but today Peyton can't walk or "even lift his head," says a family spokesman.

The state Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services Communications has suspended Sunland's pest-control license as the investigation continues.

Investigators found that devices Sunland should have used to test the home for safety were not working properly, reports WPTV.

The state also says that Sunland didn't participate in a training program required for the particular chemical used in the fumigation. Terminix says its "heart goes out to the family" but wouldn't comment further because of the pending lawsuit.

Peyton's prospects for recovery are unclear, but he currently requires constant care. "It's hopeful and encouraging that he has made some improvement but he's nowhere near the kid that he used to be," says his uncle, Ed Gribben. (Pesticides also sickened a family vacationing in the Virgin Islands.)

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