



# Humboldt County Department of Health and Human Services Division of Environmental Health

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## Bed Bug Fact Sheet

Bed bugs were very common household pests before World War II. Widespread use of insecticides (insect poisons) almost eradicated them from the U.S. by the 1970's. However, virtually every insecticide that was used to combat the bugs before 1975 is no longer available. Also, since so many more people now travel internationally, more bed bugs are hitching rides on baggage and clothing.

### What are bed bugs?

Bed bugs are small, reddish-brown wingless insects that feed on human blood during the night. They are about the size of a lady bug or an apple seed. Bed bugs do not fly. They either crawl or are carried from place to place in a person's belongings. Before a bed bug feeds on blood, its body looks flat with a circular abdomen. After it has fed, the body gets longer and narrower. Bed bugs can survive for months without a blood meal.

### Do bed bugs affect humans?

Bed bugs feed at night when people are sleeping. The bite of a bed bug is usually painless, and a person may not even know they have been bitten until a large itchy welt appears on their skin several days later. Some people do not react to bed bug bites. While these bites may be a nuisance, bed bugs do not transmit disease to humans.

### Where do bed bugs live?

Bed bugs are most commonly found in sleeping areas including beds and bedroom furniture, mattresses, and linens. Bed bugs may also be found in the cracks and crevices of bed frames, dressers, upholstered furniture, baseboards, or loosened wall paper.

### Signs of bed bugs include:

- Empty bed bug skins
- Blood spots or stains on bedding, mattresses, furniture or walls.
- Bed bugs themselves

### Getting rid of bed bugs:

Washing clothing and bedding in hot water will kill bed bugs on those items. The California Department of Public Health recommends hiring a licensed pest control operator to get rid of bed bugs in the room or building where they are found.

### Where can I get more information?

- California Department of Public Health Vector-Borne Disease Section : <http://www.cdph.ca.gov/healthinfo/discond/pages/bedbugs.aspx>
- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention: [http://www.cdc.gov/nceh/ehs/publications/Bed\\_Bugs\\_CDC-EPA\\_Statement.html](http://www.cdc.gov/nceh/ehs/publications/Bed_Bugs_CDC-EPA_Statement.html)



Bed Bug on Finger



Bed Bug Adult



Bed Bug Shells on Mattress



Bed Bug Bites



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## Bed Bug Prevention Checklist for Hotel/Motel Operators

### **Why do I need to worry about bed bugs?**

Lodging places are especially vulnerable to bed bug infestations because guests are constantly coming and going, and the bugs are great at hitchhiking on clothing and luggage. It is also very bad for PR if word gets out that your facility has bed bugs. Follow this checklist to address the issue now.

### Be Proactive!

- Develop a bedbug action plan to respond to a bed bug complaint or infestation.
- Create an education program for staff and guests.
- Use mattress and box springs that are bed bug proof.
- Design room/furniture layout that is unfriendly to bedbugs and easy to inspect.

### Education of Staff should Include Information on:

- How bed bugs are introduced and spread in hotels
- How to identify the signs of bed bug infestation and take steps to control it
- How to respond to a bed bug complaint
- Measures to conciliate guests and minimize PR impacts
- Procedures for quickly eliminating known infestations

### Education of Guests should Include Written Information on:

- That bed bugs have become a nationwide problem
- How bed bugs are introduced into hotels/motels
- Proactive measures being taken by management to reduce likelihood of infestation
- What to do if they suspect an infestation in their room

### Actions that can Help You Prevent or Detect Bed Bugs Early!

- Use mattresses and box springs that are bed bug proof.
- Housekeepers should check daily for bed bugs in the following places:
  - ✓ All bedding, mattress, box springs, including seams, and around headboard and wall
  - ✓ If bug evidence is found, contact a supervisor and DO NOT remove anything from room.
- Conduct periodic intensive inspections throughout hotel by trained staff or pest professionals.

### Responding to a Bed Bug Incident

- Collect and save specimens for identification by a pest control professional.
- Take the subject room out of service immediately (even before bed bugs are confirmed).
- DO NOT place linens in the common laundry cart. Bag and isolate them.
- Respond sympathetically to guests reporting bed bug problems.
- Arrange for a professional inspection as soon as possible.
- If the problem is verified inspect all rooms adjacent, above, and below the infested room.
- Keep all affected rooms out of service until successful control has been confirmed.

### Actions to Prevent the Further Spread of Bed Bugs:

- When removing beds/furniture, take precautions (plastic wrap, etc.) to prevent spread of bed bugs elsewhere. Store infested furniture separately, etc.
- Follow good laundry handling practices. Keep carts in hallway during room service; separate clean and dirty laundry and process/store them separately.
- Seal or caulk all crevices, cracks, holes, and repair damaged areas that could harbor bed bugs.
- Vacuum and steam clean items prone to bugs: under beds, headboard, furniture, drapes, pictures.

See the following California Department of Public Health website for more info:

<http://www.cdph.ca.gov/HealthInfo/discond/Pages/BedBugs.aspx>



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## Bed Bug Prevention Checklist for Apartment Operators

### **Why do I need to worry about bed bugs?**

Often by the time property managers realize there is a bed bug problem on site, the infestation has become widespread. Then, bed bugs are the most difficult and expensive pest to control. It's essential to have an action plan in place to identify and control bed bugs at the first sign of an infestation. This checklist is intended as a guideline rather than a comprehensive list of all actions that should be taken.

### Be Proactive!

- Develop a bed bug action plan in advance to deal with infestations including strategies for dealing with: 1) responding to pest complaints, 2) eliminating known infestations, 3) educating residents, 4) managing the spread of bugs to other areas, and 5) responding to the media.
- Implement a community wide education program within the complex to inform residents and staff about bedbugs. Visiting caregivers also should be educated.
- Conduct ongoing inspections of common areas such as laundries, lounges, etc,
- Use mattress and box springs that are bed bug proof and aid in early detection of bugs.

### Education of Residents and Staff Should Include Written Information on:

- How bed bugs have become a nationwide problem and their role as a public health pest
- Where bed bugs come from and how they are introduced and spread in apartments
- How to prevent bed bugs, including clutter removal, avoidance of used mattresses, etc
- How to identify the signs of bed bugs and what steps to take immediately if present
- Maintenance workers also should be trained in assisting the pest control contractor, maintaining complaint and action records, helping to ensure resident cooperation.

### Actions by Residents that Can Help Prevent Bed Bugs and Assist Early Detection

- Don't scavenge mattresses, beds, or other furniture that has been discarded.
- Inspect carefully to make sure there are no bed bugs in any used beds/furniture you purchase.
- Use mattress and box springs that are bed bug proof and inspect regularly.
- Pull your bed 2 inches from the wall so it is not touching the wall or curtains.
- Reduce clutter. Don't store piles of clothes, boxes, toys etc. on the floor or under the bed.
- When travelling, 1) do not unpack until you check the bed area for bed bugs, 2) inspect your luggage before you leave the lodging, 3) wash and dry your clothes immediately upon return.

### Responding to a Bed Bug Incident

- Have resident collect and save specimens for identification and arrange for a professional inspection ASAP, even if the complaint is not confirmed.
- Respond sympathetically to people reporting bed bugs. Tell residents how to prepare for pest control service (based on their recommendations).
- Take actions to prevent the further spread of bed bugs including inspecting all apartments adjacent to, above, and below any infested apartment.
- Every serviced apartment should be re-inspected and serviced again if necessary.
- If there are infestations in different parts of a building or multiple buildings, the infestation is likely widespread, and all apartments may need to be inspected and serviced if needed.

### Actions that can Help Reduce the Further Spread of Bed Bugs

- Seal cracks near beds such as those along baseboards, and around heating units, pipes, etc.
- Repair holes and other damage in walls; glue peeling wallpaper, repair peeling paint, etc.
- Immediately bag, seal and discard belongings (including furniture) left by departing residents.

See the following California Department of Public Health website for more info:

<http://www.cdph.ca.gov/HealthInfo/discond/Pages/BedBugs.aspx>



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## Bed Bug Prevention Checklist for Shelter Operators

### **Why do I need to worry about bed bugs?**

Shelters are especially vulnerable to bed bug infestations because guests are constantly coming and going under crowded conditions. The temporary residents are also at risk for transporting bed bugs in their belongings and carrying them elsewhere. This checklist is a guideline for addressing the issue.

#### Be Proactive!

- Develop a procedure to help prevent the introduction and spread of bed bugs in the shelter.
- Use mattress and box springs that are bed bug proof and aid in early detection of bugs.
- Regularly inspect bed frames and seams in mattresses and box springs.
- Regularly monitor all common areas, laundries, storage areas, etc.
- Reduce clutter such as piles of clothes, boxes, suitcases, toys, etc on the floor or under the bed.
- Do not introduce used furniture into the shelter unless it has been heat-treated or fumigated.
- Purchase furniture that is less bed bug friendly to replace furniture that is being discarded.
- Seal cracks near beds such as those along baseboards, and around heating units, pipes, etc.
- Repair holes and other damage in walls; glue peeling wallpaper, repair peeling paint, etc.
- Vacuum sleeping areas frequently; seal and discard vacuum bags.
- Immediately bag, seal and dispose belongings discarded by residents who have left.

#### Education of Staff Should Include Information on:

- How bed bugs have become a nationwide problem and their role as a public health pest
- Where bed bugs come from and how they are spread in shelters
- The role of clutter in bed bug infestations
- How to identify the signs of bed bug infestation and take steps to control it
- Procedures for quickly eliminating known infestations

#### Actions During the Admissions Process That Can Help Prevent Bed Bug Introduction

- Advise individuals that "As part of our pest management program, we would like to know if you have recently encountered pests such as lice, roaches, mice, or bed bugs that we can help you with." The question should be non-threatening and broad in scope so individuals do not think you are trying to turn them away.
- If bed bugs or lice are mentioned, inspect the person's belongings for signs of infestation.
- Provide educational literature to **all** individuals entering the shelter about lice, bed bugs, etc. The bed bug material should include items such as: 1) Bed bugs have become a nationwide problem, 2) Where bed bugs come from and how they travel, 3) How to recognize bed bug bites, 4) The role of clutter in bed bug infestations, 5) What to do if they suspect bed bugs.
- Know how to recognize bed bug bites (search for photos online)
- Consider using a clothes drier to heat-treat items which can be safely dried and bagged, and isolate all other items until they can be thoroughly inspected.

#### Responding to a Bed Bug Incident

- Collect and save specimens for identification and arrange for a professional inspection ASAP.
- Reduce clutter and remove unnecessary personal belongings from the infested area. Isolate the belongings and launder/dry on a hot cycle and seal or treat all non-laundrable items.
- When removing beds/furniture wrap in plastic to prevent spread of bugs and store separately.
- Intensively clean all areas around the infestation area. Vacuum or steam treat areas, especially bed frames, mattresses, headboards, dressers, nightstands, tables, and carpeted areas.
- Limit use of pesticides as much as possible to protect vulnerable guests.

See the following California Department of Public Health website for more info:

<http://www.cdph.ca.gov/HealthInfo/discond/Pages/BedBugs.aspx>