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Bedbugs are back with a vengeance

Public health officials are worried about the recent influx in the number of bed bug infestations being reported to their agencies. In Ohio, for example, infestations are so widespread that the state's governor appealed to the EPA for help. Bed bugs have made a resurgence because our modern, mobile lifestyles have combined with pesticide-resistant insects to create large infestations in communities across the country.

Campus housing creates an especially ideal environment for bed bugs to flourish with the high turnover rate of rooms and furniture from year-to-year. In addition, residents typically are more transient than typical tenants, so they have the potential to frequently infect and reinfect an area that has already been treated.

Prevention

Bed bugs are capable travelers - they move easily from place to place by crawling inside luggage, attaching themselves to clothing, shoes, purses, etc. Bed bugs can easily crawl from room to room within a property and quickly spread from the site of the original infestation. Knowing what to look for is key to preventing the transportation of the insects:



- Bed bugs are small insects that feed mainly on human blood. A newly hatched bed bug is semitransparent, light tan in color and about the size of a poppy seed. Adult bed bugs are flat, have rusty-colored oval bodies, and are about the size of an apple seed.
- The bed bugs typically leave behind blood stains, droppings and eggs in locations where they frequent, such as mattress seams, sheets, pillow cases and upholstered furniture.
- Bite marks from bed bugs typically appear within a few hours of the bite, usually where skin is exposed during sleep. They can be small bumps or large, itchy welts, depending on your personal reaction to the bite.

Once you are aware of the tell-tale signs of the bed bug, be on the lookout for their droppings on your furniture and check your luggage and other personal items when traveling.

Additionally, in order to prevent bed bugs from entering the property, we recommend the following:

- Any crevices and joints in baseboards
- Repair cracks in drywall
- Tighten loose light switch covers
- Minimize clutter where the bugs can easily hide

Treatment

Because today's bed bugs are resistant to many common indoor pesticides, infestations typically require the services of a well-trained and licensed pest management professional. A good terminator will:

- Inspect your property before giving you a price quote or begin any pesticide application.
- Give you a written inspection report and an action plan of how to prepare for treatment and prevent further infestation.
- Base quotes on inspection findings, not flat fees. The cheapest services are rarely the best.
- Visit often until the job is done.
- Employ qualified, well-trained pest management officials.
- Educate you on how to further prevent bed bugs.
- Work with you until the bed bugs are gone.
- Use the least toxic pesticide labeled for bed bugs that will be effective.

We recommend that you contact your University or [state's health department](#) for more information concerning pest management. The University should also have information regarding whether or not they have had any recent infestations.

Because of the increase in infestations and heightened awareness about bed bugs in general, it is important that you address any suspected infestation immediately and communicate to your tenants in an appropriate manner.

Additional Resources

We have found several great resources regarding bed bugs that we recommend you use to educate your members and volunteers about this nasty problem.

- [Bedbug Guide](#): this resource, developed by the New York City Department of Health, is a wealth of easy-to-read information about bed bugs.
- [Bedbugs Video](#): The Washington DC Department of Health created a public service announcement that provides detailed information about bed bug treatment and prevention in a short video format.
- [What You Need to Know to Control Bedbugs](#) (brochure)
- [What You Should Know About Bedbugs](#): A short handout developed by Stanford University that encourages students and visitors to campus to help in the fight against bedbugs.

Email: sara_sterley@mjinsurance.com

Sorority Division: (888) 442-7470

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