

Let's Beat the Bug!

In Short

- Follow NPMA's Best Management Practices
- Make eradication your goal.
- Protect yourself by making sure your written materials are up to date.
- Be aware of what your customers want.
- Make instructions useable.
- Avoid scare tactics
- Recognize how bed bugs disperse and what this means for you.
- Avoid discarding furniture
- Report non-compliance with preparation instructions to landlords.
- Remember bed bugs are not cockroaches.

For more information contact the **Bed Bug InformationLine** at 612-624-2200, 1-855-644-2200 bedbugs@umn.edu, or visit www.bedbugs.umn.edu

Bed Bug Updates for Pest Management Professionals

This tasksheet is designed to update PMPs on key issues that will help you in solving tough problems related to bed bug issues. This sheet does not replace standard factsheets on bed bug control, but does provide a summary of issues commonly encountered by the *Lets Beat the Bug Campaign!*

Best Management Practices are available from the National Pest Management Association. (www.pestworld.org/all-things-bed-bugs/best-practices/guidelines) While lengthy and seemingly complex, this information was designed to encompass as many scenarios as possible where bed bugs might become a problem. Taking time to review these practices and select the steps most applicable to your business will help you to ensure you are providing complete services to your customers.

Bed bug control goal: The goal of any bed bug control program should be eradication, not simple monthly management. A few easy changes to your protocol can greatly reduce the incidences of bed bugs. Sell your services to detect and eradicate not monthly spraying programs.

Protect Yourself. After reviewing the best management practices, make sure your contracts and information sheets are complete and reflect how you control bed bugs in your accounts. Many changes and new information have occurred: make sure you are up-to-date and that you communicate this to your customers.

What people want: in our work with the bed bug *InformationLine* we see patterns in the concerns that are brought to us.

- ✓ Reassurance that their efforts and yours will be successful.
- ✓ A reputable service
- ✓ Easy to understand information on what is involved in the treatment

Produce proper and useable instructions: As bed bugs become a greater problem in low income areas, you may deal with people who have limited English or reading abilities. Developing picto-gram instruction sheets (or sheets with more pictures than words) will help you better communicate and obtain the cooperation of tenants and customers.

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Avoid scare tactics: Avoiding consumer uncertainty from over-stating the risks of damage to health or property from competitors' methods, it simply confuses the customer and results in excessive worry.

Recognize consequences of dispersal: Bed bugs are effectively using human systems to move around and find new places to infest. They may disperse from a sleeping site to other areas of an apartment, or they may be carried from one room (or apartment) to another. They may set up transient sites, or sites where they may not create an infestation but may wait until the next person picks them up. What this means for you:

- Do not just focus on the bedrooms, bed bug infestations have been seen in all rooms of the home.
- Ask yourself: Are there areas that multiple families will use (laundry rooms, common areas) which could be harboring a bed bug infestation? This is particularly relevant in multi-family housing accounts.
- Ask about visitors to homes where a chronic infestation has occurred. There may be another source of bed bugs feeding the on-site infestation.
- Check neighboring living spaces.

Avoid discarding furniture: We recommend that you do not ask your clients to discard furniture (unless very heavily infested and you judge it is highly likely that bed bugs will escape your treatments). Clients are resistant to discarding furniture as it is expensive to replace. Discarding furniture also means new furniture will be acquired and, depending on the source, re-used / recycled items will require an inspection or control treatment.

Report non-compliance: For multifamily housing, report non-compliance with preparation instructions to management and find out why non-compliance is happening. Do not let uncontrolled infestations go unreported. Uncontrolled infestations in multi-family housing only lead to more infestations and unhappy customers.

Bed bugs are not cockroaches: do not assume that a simple crack and crevice application will control bed bugs. There are substantial differences in how bed bugs and cockroaches pick up insecticides. When using insecticides: use three formulations (residual, fast acting and dust) to the fullest extent the label allows and as per the size of the infestation.

By Amelia Shindelar and Dr. Stephen Kells, 2014

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In accordance with the Americans with Disabilities Act, this information is available in alternative forms of communication upon request by calling 651/201-6000. TTY users can call the Minnesota Relay Service at 711 or 1-800-627-3529.

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