



Managing Bed Bugs in the Workplace

It is becoming fairly commonplace to find bed bugs in public and private work places. Why? Bed bugs are small and they like to hide. Anyone could carry them into your building on their clothing, personal belongings and shoes. However there is no need to panic if you find them in your work place. Properly managed, the bed bugs can be eliminated with a minimum of disruption to your operations. It is important that program and facility management work together in addressing bed bugs. Below are some facts and strategies to adopt if your workplace is experiencing an occurrence of bed bugs.



Adults
1/4"



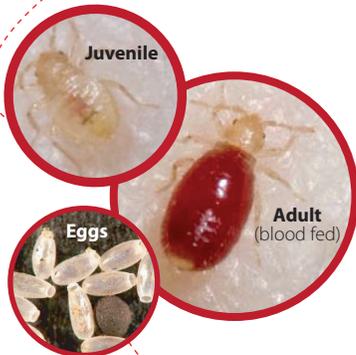
Know some basic facts about bed bugs.

- Bed bugs do not fly (they don't have wings!).
- Bed bugs cannot jump.
- Bed bugs crawl fast.
- Bed bugs like to hide.
- Bed bugs feed on human and animal blood.
- Mature bed bugs can survive for several months without a blood meal.
- Bed bugs are attracted to the heat and carbon dioxide we produce.
- Bed bugs are not known to transmit disease.
- Bed bugs are nocturnal insects, except in buildings where the carbon dioxide levels are at their highest during the day.

Identify them.

- Bed bugs are reddish brown and shaped like a tick.
- Bed bug eggs and juveniles are tiny, but visible.
(A flashlight and magnifying glass make them easier to see.)
- About 70% of the people bitten by bed bugs will develop itchy welts. These welts typically occur in groups or clusters on exposed skin, but otherwise they look like other insect bites. To see more photographs of bed bugs and bed bug bites, visit www.centralohiobedbugs.org

Bed bug bites



Juvenile

Adult
(blood fed)

Eggs



Bed bugs
on office chair

Survey the premises.

- Train your staff to know what bed bugs look like and how to identify them.
- Carefully inspect the area where the suspected bed bug was found as soon as you can.
- Because bed bugs like to hide, it is important to know where to look for them.

Check the following areas:

- the folds and seams in upholstery
- lockers
- floor baseboards
- cubicle walls and office furniture
- wall joints and corners
- electrical outlets and switches
- piles of papers and other nooks and crannies

Respond to your findings: if you find more bed bugs...

- Don't crush them! It may be impossible to make a positive identification from smashed bug parts.
- Put the bug(s) in a pill bottle or a tightly sealed plastic bag so that your pest management professional (PMP) can make a positive identification.
- Try to isolate the area where the bug(s) were found.





Act quickly.

- Contact your pest management professional (PMP) immediately.
- Once on site, the PMP should first verify that you have bed bugs, then provide you with a treatment plan that explains the chemicals used, how they will be applied, if traps will be set, and when follow up inspections and treatments will be scheduled.
- Treatment should not occur while people are in the area.
- To choose a PMP experienced with bed bugs:
 1. Ask what the company's experience is with treating for bed bugs and how long they've been doing bed bug exterminations.
 2. Ask if they are licensed by Ohio Department of Agriculture (you can check the status by calling ODA at 1-800-282-1955, ext. 31). NEVER use an unlicensed applicator.
 3. Ask for references and estimates. Compare treatment costs.

Protect yourself and your employees.

- Staff and clients should not be in the area where the bug(s) were found, if possible.
- Coats, purses and other personal belongings should be placed in a tightly sealed plastic bag, or a plastic container with a tight fitting lid.
- Keeping an extra pair of shoes for use in the work place until the bed bugs are gone helps to prevent transferring bugs to employees' homes and cars
- Reduce clutter if possible to eliminate bed bug hiding places.
- Advise staff to check their shoes and other clothing at the end of the day.
- In high risk work places, consider installing a clothes dryer on the premises for the employees to use. (Run clothing and dryer safe items on highest heat setting. Run for at least 30 minutes to kill all bugs and eggs)

Communicate with staff and customers.

- Please consult your human resource department and office of communications to discuss the appropriate strategy for communicating the incident to employees. There are many things that can be done to reassure the people in your office.
- Recognize that silence is your worst enemy because it leads to speculation, and speculation leads to distrust and panic.
- Assure everyone that: bed bugs do not transmit disease; bed bugs in one office does not translate to bed bugs in every office or the whole building; the bed bugs will be controlled by a licensed PMP.
- Define the area of the office that will be treated. Most people will assume that the entire building will be treated, but that is highly unlikely.
- Explain to staff that the chemicals that will be used are approved by USEPA and that they are considered safe when they are applied according to the label.
- Avoid using the terms "infestation" or "infested." A few bed bugs in one or two locations in your office is not an infestation, it is an occurrence.
- Have copies of the material safety data sheets for the chemicals that will be used to kill the bed bugs available to staff.

What if I have an employee bringing bed bugs from home?

- Discuss with human resources a plan for dealing with an employee who is living in a bed bug infested home.
- Dealing with an employee who has bed bugs requires sensitivity. People feel ashamed that they have the bugs, and they are reluctant to talk about their problem with anyone.
- Blaming or accusing the employee won't solve the problem. Getting bed bugs is no one's fault.
- Deciding whether to exclude the employee from the workplace is your decision. There are no health or OSHA guidelines that outline a procedure.

Strategies for managers of employees dealing with bed bugs at home:

- Discreetly speak with your employee, and ask them to bring a change of clothing with them that had been dried and sealed in a plastic bag just before leaving home. Provide a place for them to change. A space without carpeting or upholstered furniture is preferred.
- Have them place the clothing, coat, and shoes worn to work in a tightly sealed plastic bag or plastic container.
- Encourage the employee to keep a pair of shoes in the workplace that they only wear at work.
- The employee should be encouraged to bring as little as possible with them from home.
- If the person lives in rental housing, and the landlord refuses to treat their building, contact their local health department. (You can find your local health department by visiting www.odh.ohio.gov click on the *Local Health Department*, menu then click *Directory*.)