

Bed Bug Addendum

Bed bugs are spreading quickly throughout the United States and they present a serious problem for all housing providers, regardless of who lives in the building. They are very hard (and expensive) to get rid of, and the process is hard on residents. When caught quickly, residents go through having staff and exterminators in their apartment, they may have to throw away some pieces of furniture or other items, and they have to wash all their clothing and bedding. In bad infestations many of a resident's belongings often need to be thrown away to get rid of the bugs. For this reason, **(insert management company's name)** and many other housing providers in Seattle have developed policies to help prevent infestations and address them quickly if they arise. This amendment is part of your lease agreement. It is critical that we, as a community, prevent them from entering or living in our building, and get rid of them quickly whenever they are found and we can only do that with your help.

The first reported infestations in the U.S. were in expensive hotels on the East Coast. They have now spread to apartment buildings, shelters, used furniture stores, even moving vans and laundry rooms all across the country. Bed bugs do not discriminate, they do not care if you are rich or poor, keep a clean house or a dirty one. They are carried in on used furniture, mattresses, clothing, in suitcases, etc., and they easily spread to other apartments once they've come in the building. Their only need is a place to hide during the day and a body to feed on at night.









If you think you have bed bugs in your apartment, please report them to staff as quickly as you can. We will check your unit for signs of the bugs and we will pay for an exterminator to come to your apartment. We will also give you other instructions to help get rid of them, such as washing all your bedding and other measures. If they are found early enough, we can avoid having to throw belongings away, so please let us know even if you're not sure. You will not get in trouble for reporting bugs to us, but we will consider it a lease violation if you fail to report bed bugs in your apartment.

The first sign of bed bugs is often the bites, which often start as welts. Bed bugs are small, nocturnal insects that feed on blood. Their bites are painless but often become itchy later. They breed very quickly and if they're allowed to do so, people generally end up with many new bites every night. Sometimes you will see signs on the sheets-small spots of blood or excrement that appears as tiny brown or black spots. Sometimes you can see the bugs themselves. They are about 1/4-inch long and 1/8-inch wide. They have flat, reddish-brown bodies with six legs, and after feeding, they become round and red. They give off a sweet, musty odor. Their eggs are white and very small. Bed bugs are typically found on mattresses, box springs and bed frames, clothing, bedding, furniture, or any dark cracks, seams, or crevices in walls or floors. As the infestation grows you can sometimes find nests. They can travel through water pipes, wall voids, and ducts, and can spread from room to room, apartment to apartment.


Preventing the Introduction of Bed Bugs


- 👉 **Use permanent plastic mattress covers on all beds.** Put duct tape over the zipper as bed bugs are small enough to fit through the openings around the zipper. The covers are inexpensive and the staff can suggest places to find them. If you notice that the plastic covering is torn, it needs to be replaced. It only works if the mattress is completely enclosed.
- 👉 **Used mattresses, used furniture, and used rugs need to be checked by the staff within a week of coming into the building.** Even furniture from thrift stores will need to be inspected. Please make an appointment with staff when you are bringing in used furniture.
- 👉 **Do not store items for other people, especially if they have been staying in a shelter or live in a building that has had bed bugs.** All of the shelters currently have bed bugs and several apartment buildings do as well. Allowing your friends to store their backpacks and other items, even for a short time, could bring in bed bugs.
- 👉 **Eliminate excess clutter** (particularly near beds and clothes), to reduce the number of places where the bugs can hide. Even if you do not have bed bugs, it is a good idea to reduce the clutter now since it would have to be cleared for the exterminators to do their work. It will also help you in passing SHA inspections.
- 👉 **If you think you might have bed bugs and you have reported it to staff,** seal bedding and clothing (e.g., sheets, blankets, pillows, and pillow cases) in a plastic bag before transporting them into or through the building, to avoid spreading the infestation to other areas. We can provide plastic bags at the office. The laundry room is an excellent place to transfer bed bugs, so keep your items in bags and under your control at all times. Dry all clothing on a hot setting. The heat is what kills the bed bugs, not the water.
- 👉 **Staff will be inspecting your bedroom area once every three months** in addition to the regular inspection that we conduct with the pest control people. This inspection will be limited to your bed area. We will be turning over your mattress, and looking under the bed. We ask that you do not launder your sheets prior to this inspection so we can check for bed bugs. We as staff realize that this is very intrusive, but regular inspections are the only way we will be able to control the bed bugs. The people doing the inspections have been trained to look for signs of bed bugs. We feel that providing a clean, safe and bug free living space is paramount. We will be respectful of your belongings.
- 👉 **We are required to give you 48 hours notice** of our intent to enter. Since speed is important we might from time to time ask your permission to enter without the proper notice. You have the right to refuse us entry unless we have given you 48 hour notice.
- 👉 **Our hope is that you do not get bed bugs.** But we will take action as soon as we can. It is our goal to keep bed bugs out of the buildings and we need your cooperation. Please report people who are violating these rules to staff so we can address the problem. It is your building and you have the right to take care of it.

Getting Rid of Bed Bugs

-  **Report the bugs to staff.** We will send someone to inspect your apartment and advise you if there are bed bugs. Then staff will ask for your cooperation and let you know specifically what needs to be done.
-  **Staff will assist** you in getting your apartment ready for the Pest Control Company. All items must be pulled away from baseboards, and clutter such as piles of clothes or toys must be cleaned up. We will advise you of any furniture that will need to be discarded.
 - Mattresses with tears will have to be bagged and thrown away.
 - Overstuffed furniture that has rips will have to be bagged and discarded.
 - Excess printed media will have to be bagged and discarded. More than two or three boxes will be considered excess.
 - The pest control company will need access to all of the floor boards.
 - Excess clothing will have to be discarded. More than two or three large bags will be considered excess.
 - Open food items will need to be discarded because of possible contamination with pest control chemicals.
 - Items hanging on the walls will need to be removed, inspected and treated.
-  **Do not remove** items from your apartment with-out contacting staff. We will provide plastic bags, and assist you in removing large items. This to keep the potential of spreading the bugs down. **Not cooperating or throwing away un-bagged items with bugs is a violation of the building rules.** You will not be charged disposal fees on any items we remove because of bed bugs.
-  **Do not treat mattresses with insecticides.** If a mattress with bed bugs on it is torn it will need to be thrown out, as the bugs can live inside the mattress where they can't be reached. We will provide a mattress cover for your mattress if it is not torn; it must stay in place for at least 18 months because bed bugs can live that long without feeding. Please report to staff if the cover becomes torn.
-  **Eliminate excess clutter** (particularly near beds and clothes), to reduce the number of places where the bugs can hide. Staff or the pest control company will tell you what needs to be cleaned up.
-  **Vacuum cracks, crevices,** and other hiding places in walls, floors, and furniture where adult bed bugs or eggs are found. Dispose of the vacuum contents in a sealed trash bag.
-  **Use hot, soapy water** or rubbing alcohol to wipe surfaces where the bugs are living. A scrub brush will remove eggs from the bed rails, floor boards and walls.
-  **Wash any infested bedding, clothing, and stuffed toys with hot,** soapy water and dry it on the hottest dryer setting. It is the heat that kills the bugs, not the water or soap. Clothing needs to be washed and bagged prior to the pest control person coming to treat your apartment. Staff

can assist you with this. Do not return un-bagged clean clothing to your apartment until after the pest control people have treated your apartment.

 **The staff may ask to place traps in your apartment.** To find out how bad the infestation is, the staff may ask to use a sticky trap in your apartment. This helps the exterminator make decisions about how best to treat the apartment.

 **We will be using various methods** to control bed bugs when we find them. But the most important thing is cooperation from the residents and de-cluttering the apartment. Failing to cooperate with staff doing bed bug treatment is a violation of the lease.

A pest control journal cites these as some of the reasons that bed bug treatments sometimes fail:

Lack of cooperation from residents

In our experience, the major reason for bed bug retreats in apartments was that the residents didn't prepare on the day of the initial treatment. *Resident cooperation with the pest control service is a must.* Residents scheduled for an initial or major bed bug service need to follow the instructions of the pest control company. Often this will mean residents will need to strip their beds of all blankets and sheets, completely empty all closets, dressers, and nightstands, wash all clothing and linens and place them inside plastic bags or bins in the living room, and then vacuum before service. Such action may sound extreme but it must be done to eliminate bed bugs in clothes and possessions, and to provide the technician with the access necessary for effective treatment.

No "magic bullet" insecticides

Modern insecticides are proving to be somewhat ineffective against bed bugs. Recent university research has shown that bed bugs are often resistant to many of the common insecticides being used today. In addition, some treatments appear to be repelling bed bugs from treated areas around the bed and furniture and driving them into deeper harborage, up into ceilings, and even into other rooms and onto other floors.

I understand that bed bugs may be present at some time at **(insert property name)**. I agree to cooperate with staff in treating my apartment.

_____	_____	_____
Resident Printed Name	Resident Signature	Date
_____	_____	_____
Management Printed Name	Management Signature	Date

How to Get Ready for Your Bed Bug Service Visit

Bed bugs are tough to control. They hide in many places...in beds, closets, furniture, behind pictures, in tiny cracks in the wall... so inspections and treatments must be thorough. Pest control technicians need your cooperation in order to control bed bugs successfully.

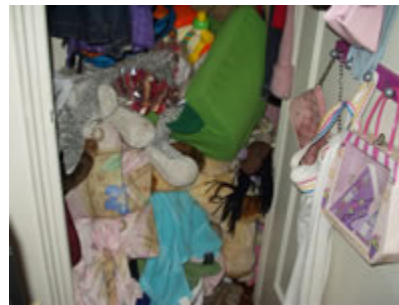
Before technicians can treat your home, you must prepare your home for service. Here's how:

Strip your beds

Remove all sheets, blankets, mattress covers, pillowcases, etc. from your beds and wash. Fold them and place them in plastic garbage bags. Do not put them back on the bed until the evening after pest control service.



Strip your beds of sheets, blankets, mattress covers, etc.



A cluttered closet makes it impossible to control bed bugs

Photos © Pinto & Associates

Remove everything from bedroom and hall closets

Your closets must be empty. Empty all dresser drawers and night stand drawers. Take everything out of nightstands and other furniture near the beds. Dresser drawers and nightstands must be empty. Remove all clothing, toys, boxes, etc. from bedroom floors. Place items in the living room.

Wash ALL clothing, towels, and other linens

This means everything ... and place the clean items inside plastic storage bins or plastic garbage bags. Store them in the living room until after treatment.

Vacuum

Vacuum floors, furniture, and inside closets, dresser drawers, and bedstands. Also vacuum mattresses and box springs. Dispose of vacuum bag.

Provide access for pest control technician

Make sure the technician can get into all closets. If possible, move bedroom furniture away from walls so there is a 3 foot space between the furniture and walls.

Avoid contact with insecticide until dry

Make sure there are no animals or people in the apartment during treatment and for at least 2 hours afterwards (check with the pest control technician for the exact time).

"How Did These Bed Bugs Get Into My Home?"

Bed bugs are secretive insects. They live in the dark in tight cracks, crevices, and holes near sleeping areas.

New bed bug infestations are usually centered around the mattress and bed frame. In heavier infestations, bugs move out to occupy hiding places further from the bed as well.

Bed bugs can hide in beds, furniture, piles of clothing, back packs, and similar everyday items. They can live for 6 or 7 months between feedings.

Common Ways for Bed Bugs to Infest Apartments

The most common way for bed bugs to invade your home is for you, your family, or your friends to bring them in without realizing it. Bed bugs are excellent "hitch-hikers." Here are some ways you could bring bed bugs into your home:

- 👉 Picking up bed bug-infested beds, mattresses, or furniture that has been discarded and placed on the street or by a dumpster.
- 👉 Visiting someone who has bed bugs and carrying them back with you on your clothing or possessions. (Children playing together in one home after another can be transferring bed bugs in their toys and backpacks.)
- 👉 Staying overnight in a bed bug-infested room in a hotel or home and bringing them home in your luggage.
- 👉 Renting furniture infested with bed bugs from furniture rental companies.
- 👉 Buying bed bug-infested second-hand furniture, carpets, blankets, luggage, pictures, and fixtures from stores, yard sales, auctions, and flea markets.
- 👉 Bed bugs can also migrate from one apartment to the next through pipe and wiring runs, and through wall and ceiling voids, in the same way that cockroaches move between apartments.



Discarded mattresses, box springs, and furniture are often infested with bed bugs

Photo © Pinto & Associates

Reduce Clutter, Vacuum, and Use Mattress Covers

There are a number of things you can do to make it more difficult for bed bugs to infest your bed.

- 👉 Vacuum your bedroom often, particularly the area around the bed and the bed itself.
- 👉 Reduce clutter. Don't keep piles of clothes, boxes, toys, shoes, etc. on the floor, under the bed, or in closets. They provide hiding places for bed bugs.
- 👉 Buy bed bug proof mattress covers (encasements) and put them on your mattresses and box springs. The encasements trap any bed bugs hidden inside the mattress and box spring so that they can't come out and bite. They will eventually die.

The encasements also prevent any new bugs from finding hiding places in your mattresses and box springs.

You can purchase encasements online or from pest control supply companies and medical supply stores. Prices range from \$20 to over \$100 each depending on their quality, size, and thickness. Choose encasements specially designed to protect against bed bugs. For a complete discussion of encasements, [click here](#), and go to #10.



Quality mattress and box spring encasements reduce bed bug problems

Photo by Richard Cooper, Cooper Pest Solutions

- ☞ Pull your bed a couple of inches away from the wall so that it is not touching the wall.
- ☞ Regularly inspect bed frames and the seams in your mattresses and box springs. Call your rental office if you find a bed bug.
- ☞ Do not scavenge mattresses, beds, or other furniture that others have thrown away. Carefully inspect used furniture, rental furniture, used luggage, and other used items before bringing them into your home.

How to Find Bed Bugs in Apartments

Anyone inexperienced with bed bugs will have little idea of just how intense an inspection it takes to find all the pockets of a bed bug infestation. Your initial inspection must be thorough, and you will need to return again after treatment and reinspect just as thoroughly.

Always check these potential hotspots:

Check the bed

Are you squeamish? Better wear gloves. Strip back the covers and look for blood spots on the sheets. Stand up the mattress. Remove the box spring and flip it over. There is no way to find bed bugs in a bed unless you do. Inspect both carefully. Check every seam.

A prime location for a bed bug is resting upside down on the underside of the box spring where the box rests on the bed frame. Look inside the box spring, too. Shine a flashlight through the gauze fabric on the bottom of the box spring. You may even have to remove the stapled fabric to inspect inside.

Also check the head board, if there is one, and look inside anything and everything that is stored under the bed. Bed bugs can hide inside shoe boxes, for example.



Strip back the covers and look for blood stains and bed bugs in seams



Stand up the box spring and shine a flashlight through the gauze fabric to find bugs inside



Be sure to check the frame where the corner and edges of the box spring rest

Photos © Pinto & Associates

Check the rest of the bedroom

Bed bugs aren't limited to beds, and your inspection shouldn't stop there. Concentrate on furnishings close to the bed. Pull out dresser drawers and check inside the drawers and in crevices. Like cockroaches, bed bugs like to squeeze into narrow spaces. Look under televisions, stereos, and other equipment, behind pictures, in the crevice behind the baseboard, and even in stacks of clothing. Bed bugs are often found hiding in tack strips under wall-to-wall carpeting and behind baseboards. Be aware that bed bugs tend to crawl upwards. Also check drapes, wall decorations, and cracks in the ceiling-wall junction.

Check the furniture in all rooms

Bed bugs hitchhike on clothing, purses, and the like from the bedroom into other rooms. Many people spend as much time on the couch or in an easy chair as they do in bed, so always check for a secondary bed bug infestation in living room and family room furniture. Remove the cushions. Check seams and crevices. Tip back the couch and chair and look underneath, particularly behind skirts and at the seams.



Check for secondary bed bug infestation in furniture throughout the residence

Take your time!

A thorough bed bug inspection in an apartment unit takes one to two hours. But it's the only way to be successful.

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