

# BED BUG CHECKLIST FOR HOTEL MANAGEMENT

Hotels and similar lodgings are vulnerable to bed bug infestations because of the constant flow of guests coming and going, and the nature of bed bugs to hitchhike on luggage and clothes. Because of the potential for negative impacts on a hotel's image if a guest is bitten by a bed bug, it is essential that managers respond quickly and effectively at the first sign of and infestation.

Here is a checklist of strategies for preventing, eliminating, and containing the spread of a bed bug infestation. There is no "magic formula" for eliminating bed bug problems - the process will take time and require patience. This is only a suggested checklist since every building is different. Hiring a pest control operator with bed bug elimination experience is recommended (see guidelines provided). If hired, always follow the pest control operator's advice.

## BE PROACTIVE

- Use good building practices and maintenance to prevent pest problems
  - Caulk baseboards, loose tiles, chair-rail moldings, and around outlets
  - Remove carpeting when possible
  - Address any clutter or storage issues
  
- Develop a "bed bug action plan" for your building(s). Include strategies for:
  - Responding to reports or complaints
  - Containing and eliminating infestations
  - Disposing of infested furniture
  - Educating and advising staff
  - Appeasing affected guests
  - Responding to the media and minimizing public relations impacts
  
- Inform and educate staff about bed bugs so they can identify an infestation before guests do. Provide information on:
  - The reappearance of bed bugs as a problem around the world
  - What are bed bugs and what they look like
  - How to recognize a bed bug problem
  - What's being done to reduce the likelihood of a bed bug infestation
  - How to prevent bed bugs from becoming a problem (i.e., incorporating bed bug inspections into housekeeping duties)
  - What to do when a bed bug problem is suspected in a room(s)
  
- Consider buying mattress encasements specifically designed for bed bugs
  - Encasements protect beds and aid in bed bug detection
  
- If bed bugs are a recurring problem, consider having periodic inspections, buying a steam cleaner (steam heated to at least 170°F) and training staff to operate it, or making serious repairs to building (i.e., replacing carpeting with hard-surface flooring).



## RESPONDING TO A COMPLAINT

- Respond sympathetically and avoid blame
- If you receive a report or complaint about bed bugs, even if it is not confirmed, take the room out of service immediately
  - Bag and isolate all washable items from the room and seal the bags tightly, but do not remove any items from the room
- If you receive a complaint from a guest, consider taking the following actions:
  - Move the guest to a new room
  - Thoroughly inspect the guest's new room for evidence of bed bugs before moving the guest in
  - Provide a factsheet about bed bugs
  - Reassure the guest that bed bugs are not known to cause disease
  - Offer to wash or dry-clean the guest's clothes
  - Offer to have the guest's luggage inspected and, perhaps, even steam-treated
  - Depending on the situation, "comp" the room
- Arrange for a professional inspection
  - Inspect affected room and all adjacent rooms (above, below, and on both sides)
  - Schedule an intervention for all rooms where bed bugs are found
- Educate staff on what they can, and should, do NOW:
  - Give them a staff checklist
  - Explain how to prepare for the inspection



## ONCE AN INFESTATION IS CONFIRMED

- Educate staff on how to prepare for treatment
- Implement monitoring system
  - Do not use any infested rooms until a pest control professional certifies them as free of bed bugs
  - Re-inspect the infested and adjacent rooms for at least two to three months to ensure that low-level bed bug populations have not gone undetected
- Prevent the spread of the infestation by doing the following:
  - Inspect all adjacent rooms above, below, and on both sides on a regular basis
  - Consider buying mattress encasements if you haven't already
  - Seal and make repairs to infested and adjacent rooms
    - Caulk or seal cracks and crevices near beds such as those along baseboards, around pipe chases, or around heating and AC units
    - Repair holes and other damage in walls
    - Repair molding, peeling wall paper, chipping paint, and any other damage that may provide hiding places for bed bugs
    - Develop a system for furniture disposal
    - Paint or seal bed frame(s) and hardwood floors

## Hiring a Pest Control Company: Don't Throw Your Money Away

To successfully eliminate bed bugs, we recommend hiring a company experienced in the Integrated Pest Management (IPM) approach to bed bug control. Do not hire a company based on price alone. Make sure the company is qualified to do the job right the first time and avoid more headaches later. Here are some tips on how to choose a pest control company for bed bug work:

- Make sure they are licensed and insured
- Ask for and check references for bed bug work
- Insist on an IPM approach – no “spray and pray” pesticide applications
- Have them provide a detailed action plan that recommends pre-treatment preparation activities (Use SPCP factsheet “How to Hire a Pest Professional for Bed Bugs” for help)
- Beware of the lowest bidder
- Beware of any “guarantees”

**Midwest Pesticide Action Center is dedicated to reducing the health risks and environmental impacts of pesticides and promoting safer alternatives.**

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