

A Quick Guide to Bed Bugs for Hotel and Motel Managers



The nation-wide resurgence of bed bugs in recent years has not left Reno and Sparks untouched. The Health Department and Nevada Department of Agriculture are experiencing a large increase in bed bug-related calls. Many of these calls come from people staying in local hotels and motels. This flyer is designed as a quick reference to support the local hospitality industry in controlling this problem. More extensive resources are listed as references at the end of this document.

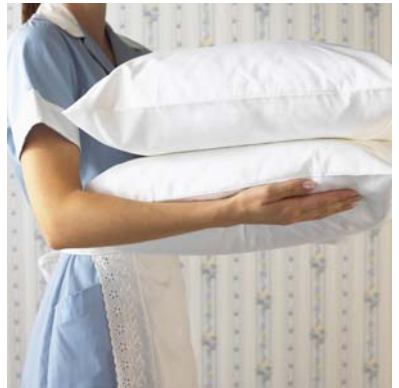
Because these insects are difficult to eradicate once an infestation gets established, the best approach is prevention.

Bed bug prevention

- 1.) Provide zippered mattress and box spring encasements.
- 2.) Train housekeeping staff to look for bed bugs and their signs.
- 3.) Launder bed linens and towels in hot water weekly.
- 4.) Vacuum rooms once a week including carpet, base boards, mattress, box spring and stuffed furniture. The crevice tool will remove eggs and bugs from cracks around the edge of the floor, etc.
- 5.) Steam clean mattresses, box springs, base boards, carpet edging, bed stand and dresser drawers, etc. between guests.
- 6.) Get rid of permanent head boards attached to the wall and home-made bases under box springs and mattresses.
- 7.) Replace wooden bed frames with metal ones.
- 8.) Require that all new tenants in weekly rentals wash their clothing and soft items in hot water before bringing them into the room. Inspect all personal items for bugs. Inspect for bugs 30 days after move in.

Suspect bed bugs when a guest or tenant tells you that they woke up with itchy bites. They may have a few bites or many. Since bed bugs are rarely seen, people think they were bitten by spiders or mosquitoes. Not all individuals react to bed bug bites. The person reporting bites may not be the one that brought bugs into the room. At this point it doesn't really matter who brought them in. **It is your responsibility to get them out.**

Check the bed for bugs which can be quite tiny. Look for bed bug signs (including black spots on the sheets and mattress, fresh blood stains on bedding, or skin casts). Take the bugs to the Health Department or State Department of Agriculture for identification. A licensed pest control operator (PCO) can also identify the bugs or do an onsite inspection



Train staff to look for bugs.



Hire a pest control operator.

If you think you have bed bugs: 1.) **hire a professional.** A licensed PCO is trained in the use of pesticides according to Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) laws. Using these chemicals incorrectly could result in legal action against you, so it is not a good idea to do this job yourself. Choose a PCO who has bed bug experience. Ask for references. **Using a PCO will help ensure success and save you money in the long run.**

Select a PCO who will work with you to develop a treatment plan using both chemical and non-chemical means. Your staff can do much of the work that doesn't involve pesticides to keep costs down. Several treatments using both chemical and non-chemical measures will be needed. Each treatment should

be scheduled about 2 weeks apart for at least 3 cycles to get rid of a bed bug problem.

Your PCO should inspect the bug-infested rooms and all adjacent rooms for bed bugs. Then he or she should provide a plan in writing along with instructions on the preparation of the rooms for pesticide treatments. Surrounding rooms including those above and below the infested room(s) should be treated. Keep a notebook or written log of all rooms treated for bed bugs including the date and treatment used.

2.) **Install zippered mattress and box springs encasements after treatment.** This will isolate any bugs that are still living or that hatch after treatment so they can't get a blood meal. They will die.



3.) **Wash all clothing**, bedding, drapes, throw rugs, pillows and any other soft items in hot water. Shoes and back packs can be put in a dryer at moderate heat for 5 minutes. Bag up all items to be laundered in plastic garbage bags and complete laundering while the room is being treated by the PCO. Anything not washable must be left in the room to be treated.

4.) **Eliminate all clutter.** Your PCO should supply written instructions for preparing the room for treatment and it's your tenant's responsibility to comply. This can be difficult with long-term residents who have lots of stuff and you may need to put pressure on your tenants to make this happen. If they refuse, get your staff to do it for them. You may need to provide staff support and contact a social worker if your tenant is disabled. If it is necessary to move tenants temporarily, the PCO should inspect the room after it's vacated. If you permanently relocate tenants, inspect the new room after one month.

5.) **Assign one vacuum cleaner for bed bug use only.** A canister type unit with disposable bags is best. Vacuuming a mattress and box spring is an effective way to reduce large numbers of bed bugs effectively. Get your PCO to train your staff on how to adequately vacuum for bed bugs. He or she should advise you on the best timing in conjunction with planned pesticide treatment. As soon as you finish vacuuming, tie off the disposable bag in a plastic trash bag and discard it in a dumpster. Store the vacuum in a large plastic garbage bag. Vacuum up some baby talcum powder every time you use the unit. Request that your PCO take your vacuum cleaner and chemically treat it to eliminate bed bugs every month or so as part of the service provided.



6.) **Use a steam cleaner on the mattresses, box springs, furniture and baseboards.** Steam heat should be done under the guidance of and in conjunction with the work done by your PCO, so discuss this with them first. Get your PCO to recommend the type of steam cleaner you should buy. It should have a rounded application head. Steam heat will kill live bugs and destroy unhatched eggs. Steam heat used right before pesticides in cracks and crevices can activate the bugs and make treatment more successful.

7.) **Get rid of items that can't be treated.** Your PCO should make the decision about whether a mattress and box spring, stuffed furniture or any other item should be discarded. Treat infested items and then wrap them in plastic before removal for pickup. Label the items as "bed bug-infested" or "contiene chinches" in Spanish so that others won't pick them up. Lock items in a dumpster if possible. Call Reno Disposal for immediate pickup.

Cooperation between all stakeholders affected by a bed bug infestation is critical to getting rid of this problem. You, the manager, play a central role in facilitating communication between all parties involved.

References: Cooper, Rick, *Bed Bug Central* at <http://www.bedbugcentral.com/bedbugs101/>
California Department of Public Health, *Guidelines for the Control and Prevention of Bed Bug Infestations in California*

This flyer was prepared by the Washoe County Health District Environmental Health Services Division in collaboration with the Nevada State Department of Agriculture.

For more Info call: **WCHD Environmental Health Services 328-2434**
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