



CONSEIL CRI DE LA SANTÉ ET DES SERVICES SOCIAUX DE LA BAIE JAMES
CREE BOARD OF HEALTH AND SOCIAL SERVICES OF JAMES BAY

PREVENTION PROTOCOL for Shelters Operators

Bed bugs are a pest common in transient populations. They can be found in hotels, motels, apartment buildings, rooming houses, dormitories and shelters.

Bed bugs do not transmit diseases to humans, but they are known to greatly impact wellness by disturbing sleep and fostering stigma and isolation.

We recommend all shelters to have a pest management plan in place and a person responsible to maintain it.

THE OBJECTIVES ARE TO:

- Teach people how to deal with bed bugs
- Inspect regularly your shelter
- Take measures to prevent, find and track the problem as early as possible
- Get support of an exterminator only when absolutely necessary
- Evaluate the intervention and reassess the shelter's needs

What are Bed Bugs?

WHAT

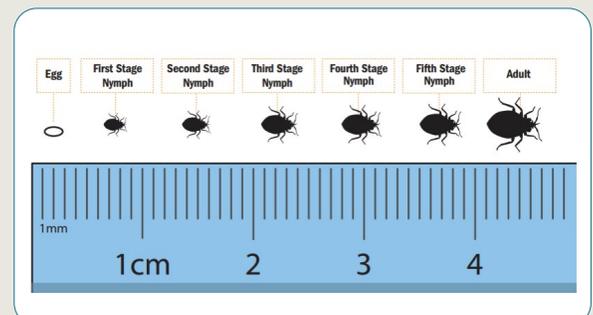
Bed bugs are biting insects, about ½ cm long. They have a flat, brown shape – looking like apple seeds. Their eggs are white and the size of a pinhead. They do not fly or jump, but travel by walking. They spread to other locations in clothing or luggage.

WHERE

Bed bugs mainly live in bedrooms and are active at night. They hide in dark places between feedings, in the folds of mattresses, pillows, behind baseboards, in floor gaps, behind posters or wallpaper, and on curtains.

Bed bugs feed on the blood of humans while they sleep. They feed once every few days, then return to their hiding place. Bed bugs can live about half a year without feeding.

Bed bugs do not transmit diseases to humans, and do not live on people directly.



Getting your shelter bed bug ready

No chemicals can stop bed bugs from entering your shelter. Creating an environment where it is harder for them to feed and hide will help reducing the spread of an infestation.

FURNITURE

- Use individual metal bed frame to prevent bed bugs from crawling up to the mattress.
- Choose vinyl mattresses and pillows or protective encasements. Try using light coloured bedding to easily spot insects.
- Declutter rooms and maintain or repair walls, floors and pieces of furniture to limit potential hiding places for bugs.
- Inspect donated items - beware of mattresses and clothes. Apply cleaning methods (Appendix A).
- Avoid furniture made of wood, wicker, and unessential textile such as drapes, curtains, extra cushion, and carpets. Limit moving.



CURTAINS



CARPETS



FURNITURES MADE OF WOOD



FABRICS EXTRA CUSHIONS

STORAGE

- Keep big resealable plastic bags and closed plastic bins to store client's belongings and dirty beddings and contain the spread of bed bugs.



PLASTIC BAGS THAT CAN BE SEALED



PLASTIC BINS TO STORE BELONGINGS

LAUNDRY ACCESS AND CLEANING

- Washing and drying clothes and bedding will reduce the number of bed bugs. Drying is the most important step - the hotter the better. Consult Appendix A for cleaning instructions
- Vacuum weekly all surfaces of the shelter where bed bugs can hide : Mattresses, pillows, couches and chairs, drawers, wardrobe, etc.
- Ideally use a HEPA-filter vacuum and a stiff nozzle.
- Empty and seal the vacuum bag in a white plastic bag. Dispose in a closed, regularly emptied bin. Clean or seal the vacuum in a plastic bag for storage.
- Dispose of infested items in sealed plastic bags to avoid spreading bed bugs. For larger items like mattresses, clearly identify as *"Infested with Bed Bugs"* or damage them so others don't take them.



Bed bug at intake



Prevention starts at the intake. Ask new clients if they have been in contact with or slept in places with bed bugs recently. Travellers can unknowingly carry them in their luggage.

If they report bed bugs : recommend to immediately wash and dry all clothing and bags. Refer to [Appendix A](#) for detailed laundering instructions.

If the client has bed bug bites, washing clothing is even more important to reduce risk of infection from scratches bites.

If laundry is not an option, assign the client to a separate sleeping area. Ideally, seal the area because bed bugs may travel. Vacuum this area often, particularly into the small gaps and nooks.

Surveillance : How to spot bed bugs

SIGNS OF BED BUGS:

- Little black spots (feces from the bed bugs)
- Dried blood stains (from bites)
- Bug shells or shed skin, which are semi-clear
- Eggs, looking like grains of white rice the size of a pinhead

VISUAL INSPECTION OF ROOMS CAN BE DONE WITH A FLASHLIGHT:

- Look for signs of bed bugs in mattresses and bed frames. Slowly lift bedding and look at the creases and seams.
- Monitor the rest of the shelter, pay attention to chairs, couches, wall junctures and small gaps.
- If insects are found, keep them in a transparent container and inspect neighbouring rooms.
- Tracking inspections, affected clients, and intervention dates in a log helps maintain a safe, clean shelter for clients and staff.

Regularly inspecting the shelter for signs of bed bugs reduces the risk of wide-spread infestation.



Proper Extermination Treatment

Extermination will control important infestations only when **combined with physical control and preventative methods**. Consult **Appendix A** for various physical control methods.

SAFETY PRECAUTIONS:

- It is highly recommended to hire a licenced professional exterminator to deal with an important infestation.
- Only use pesticide registered by Health Canada and follow label instructions.
- Avoid applying pesticide yourself unless properly trained - It can be dangerous for your health and that of others.

RETURNING TO THE SHELTER:

- Respect the recommended time by the exterminator before returning to the shelter.
- Wait at least **6 Hours** before returning inside.
- For pregnant people, people with respiratory problems/allergies, children and infants, the waiting period increases to at least **24 Hours**.

AFTER TREATMENT:

- It is recommended to ventilate the area.
- Avoid walking barefoot for at least **48 Hours**.
- Continue your monitoring of bed bugs. A second treatment may be necessary.



EVALUATION

TO DETERMINE OF AN EXTERMINATION TREATMENT IS SUCCESSFUL, IT IS RECOMMENDED TO HAVE:



3 Evaluation inspections



14 days apart between each inspection



No visible bed bugs at any check-up

Track your evaluation in the surveillance log used for inspections.

UNSUCCESSFUL EVALUATION CAN MEAN:

- Rooms are not properly cleaned
- Treatment should be more synchronized across all affected rooms.
- There may be new bed bugs introduced or undiscovered nests.

APPENDIX A



How to clean items to prevent bed bugs

METHOD	DESCRIPTION	CONDITIONS	ITEMS
Dryer (heat)	Best method to kill bed bugs. Dry the items at least 30 minutes and select the hottest cycle.	At least 30 minutes at the hottest temperature (minimum 50°C)	Clothes Beddings Shoes Sport equipment
Washer (heat)	Use washing machine if there is no dryer available. Water must be very hot and cover the items entirely. This method does not work with front load washers.	Minimum temperature of 60°C	Clothes and beddings that don't go in the dryer
Steam cleaner (heat)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To use if dryer and washer are unavailable or if unfit for the item. • Vacuum before steaming to reduce the number of bed bugs. Vacuum after steaming to remove dead insects. • Select steamer with high temperature and dry vapor or low flow steam. • Follow manufacturer's indications regarding the treatment speed. If no indications are provided, move the steamer nozzle at a speed of 2 cm per second on the fabric for an in-dept treatment. • Use larger nozzle to reduce the jet pressure. 	<p>At a speed of 2 cm per second on the fabric.</p> <p>Minimum temperature of 50°C, set the appliance at 70-80°C.</p>	Couches Mattresses Upholstered furniture *Do not apply on delicate items
Bed bug heater (heat)	Portable heating devices to treat bed bugs exist on the market to treat smaller items without using excess moisture.	2-3 hours at a minimum temperature of 49°C	Books Items that don't go in the dryer, washer
Freezer (cold)	<p>Cold temperature can kill bed bugs. Caution: regular freezers may not be cold enough, verify the device temperature before treatment.</p> <p>To avoid that bed bugs enter a dormant stage, it is important that the drop in temperature happens quickly.</p>	3-5 days at temperatures lower than -18°C.	Sport equipment, Wheelchairs, canes, toys, books and other items non-water or heat proof
Pesticides (chemical)	Pesticides can be hazardous to humans and pets. Be cautious of over-the-counter pesticides.	It is recommended that a trained pest control specialist apply pesticides authorized by Health Canada.	Follow instructions on product label

References

Visit our Health Tip on Bed Bugs on the CBHSSJB website:

<https://creehealth.org/health-tips/bed-bugs>

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