

GUIDANCE FOR PROPERTY OWNERS AND TENANTS ON THE CONTROL AND PREVENTION OF BED BUG INFESTATIONS IN CALIFORNIA

There has been a resurgence of bed bug infestations throughout the United States. In response to this re-emerging public health issue, the California Department of Public Health (CDPH) is providing guidance to assist affected entities on the prevention, surveillance, and control of bed bug infestations. Based on reports from local health departments and pest control operators (PCOs), bed bug infestations have been found in hotels, nursing homes, public housing, apartment complexes, shelters, moving vans, jails, furniture rental stores, dormitories and other multi-unit dwellings. In addition, information is often sought by private home owners experiencing bed bug infestations. This guidance document is intended to provide recommendations to California stakeholders on procedures to control active bed bug infestations, minimize the spread of infestations, and prevent future infestations.

Bed bugs are small wingless insects, about 1/4 of an inch or smaller, ranging in color from yellowish-white to reddish-brown. Bed bugs feed on blood, normally during the night. Most, but not all, of a bed bug population will congregate in cracks and crevices near where humans and pets sleep or rest. Bed bugs live in furniture such as mattresses, box springs, couches, easy chairs, dressers, and night tables, as well as electronic devices such as alarm clocks and radios. Infestations of bed bugs are not limited to homes and hotels; they can be found in public transportation, hospitals, and long-term care facilities. Evidence of a bed bug infestation may include: presence of the bed bugs, their cast exoskeletons, or rust-colored spots/stains on bedding, walls, or furniture. Bed bugs can live many months (adults generally live up to one year) without a blood meal while hiding in cracks and crevices.

Bed bugs, while a significant social problem, do not transmit disease to humans. However, bed bug bites can cause red, raised, itchy lesions on the skin that may take up to 14 days to develop and allergic reactions to the bites have been reported. Scratching bug bites can also lead to secondary skin infections. Some individuals report significant psychological distress, disruption of sleep, nervousness, and agitation when dealing with a bed bug infestation.

The essential components of bed bug control and prevention are:

- identification of bed bug infestations;
- utilization of best available bed bug treatment strategies and prevention measures; and
- cooperation between all stakeholders affected by a bed bug infestation.

A. Bed bug prevention and control recommendations for owners and operators of hotels and other multi-unit dwellings

When confronted with a bed bug infestation, owners and operators of hotels and other multi-unit dwellings should not attempt to control the infestation prior to an assessment from a licensed PCO. Licensed pest control operators and/or companies should always provide proof of their licensure upon request (visit the [California Department of Consumers Affairs, Structural Pest Control Board license webpage](#) or call (916) 561-8704 to confirm that the company is certified); hired PCOs should follow the [National Pest Management Association \(NPMA\) guidelines](#) when conducting bed bug inspections and treatments