

Chapter 6 Part 5 Bed Bug Policy

Background and General Information

What are bed bugs?

Bed bugs are small nocturnal insects that live by feeding on the blood of humans and other warm-blooded hosts. Bedbugs are generally active only at dawn, with a peak feeding period about an hour before sunrise. After feeding for about five minutes, the bug returns to its hiding place.

Bites consist of a raised red bump or flat welt, and are often accompanied by intense itching. The red bump or welts are the result of an allergic reaction to the anesthetic contained in the bedbug's saliva, which is inserted into the blood of the host. Bed bug bites may appear indistinguishable from mosquito bites, though they tend to last for longer periods. Bites may not become immediately visible, and can take up to 9 days to appear. Bed bug bites tend not to have a red dot in the center which is a characteristic of flea bites. A trait shared with flea bites, however, is the tendency towards arrangements of sequential bites. Bites are often aligned three in a row, giving rise to the colloquialism "breakfast, lunch and dinner."

There have been no known cases of bed bugs passing disease from host to host. Extensive testing has been done in laboratory settings that also conclude that bed bugs are unlikely to pass disease from one person to another. Therefore, bedbugs are less dangerous than some more common insects such as the flea.

How did I get bed bugs?

Bedbugs were originally brought to the United States by early colonists from Europe. Bedbugs thrive in places with high occupancy, such as hotels. Bedbugs were believed to be altogether eradicated 50 years ago in the United States and elsewhere with the widespread use of DDT. One recent theory about bedbug reappearance involves potential geographic epicenters in some states. It was determined that workers in these facilities were the main spreaders of these bedbugs, unknowingly carrying them to their places of residence and elsewhere after leaving work.

Many years ago, bed bugs were eradicated using a pesticide, DDT. This is no longer used and may account for the resurgence of these bugs in the US as well as the increase in international travel.

Anyone can pick bed bugs up from a location where they presently exist – someone's apartment, hotels, motels, movie theatres, etc. Bed bugs are equal opportunity pests – they will infest anyone, anywhere.

What **SHOULD** I do if I believe I have bed bugs?

Notify the Executive Director – As-soon-as-possible.

Be prepared to follow the written instructions to the letter and in a timely manner (within 24 hours).

What **SHOULDN'T** I do if I have bed bugs?

Do not panic! Although bed bugs can be annoying, they can be battled safely and successfully if you follow all guidelines given to you by the Housing Authority and Pest Control Company. If you believe you have bed bugs, do **NOT** wait until after 5 pm on Friday to notify someone. It is not possible to get service from the exterminator after hours.

Do not apply pesticides on your own. The Housing Authority will hire a licensed pest control operator to confirm the infestation and to develop an integrated pest management plan.

Do not place your mattress or any furniture on the street or next to the dumpster. Infested furniture can be cleaned and treated. Placing infested furniture (particularly mattresses) on the street or by the dumpster may simply help spread bed bugs to other units.

Do not allow others to come to your house and do not visit others before the bedbugs are eradicating. Doing so could result in further spreading.

Bed Bug Policy

The staff of the Shelton Housing Authority is committed to an effective and efficient response to residents who suspect they may have bed bugs. For the safety and comfort of all residents living in Shelton Housing Authority Units, our staff will adhere to the following guidelines:

As soon as a resident suspects that he/she may have bed bugs, they should contact the Executive Director at 308-647-6673 or after hours send an email to director@sheltonhousing.org. If any Shelton Housing Authority Staff Member learns of a potential bed bug problem, their first call should be to the Executive Director.

The Executive Director will notify the pest control company as soon as possible so the exterminator can be dispatched to the location to perform a thorough inspection of the unit in question. Please note that should a resident notify the Executive Director on a weekend or holiday; the pest control company will be contacted on the next workday. It is recommended that the resident contact the Executive Director as early on a regular business day as possible. The exterminator cannot be dispatched on weekends or holidays.

Once notice is received by the Executive Director, residents may not, at any time, deny the exterminator or Housing Authority Staff access to the unit.

Exterminator Findings

If the exterminator finds that there are no bedbugs present in the unit, then no further action will be taken. The resident will be asked to continue monitoring the unit, and to notify the Housing

Authority immediately if there are further problems.

If the exterminator concludes that bed bugs are present in the unit, the Housing Authority will provide the affected resident(s) with a detailed list of instructions for the removal and laundering of their personal items. The Housing Authority is not responsible for washing/drying/dry cleaning.

Only the exterminator can confirm or deny the presence of bed bugs – NOT any outside person.

Bed bugs are a serious community issue, and ALL residents are expected to comply with all instructions given to them within 24 hours once bed bugs have been confirmed within their living space.

Insecticides alone will not control bedbug infestations. Your cooperation and following the directions on the “Bedbug Preparation Checklist” is required for the treatment to work. Please remember, you **MUST NOT** hinder the treatment of the unit. Your cooperation is essential. If you do not cooperate and/or do not complete the checklist we will be forced to issue a Demand for Possession and your lease may be terminated.