Bed Bug Protocol

**University Response to Reports of Bed Bugs**

**Students should not clean their room or belongings until an inspector can determine if there are any signs of bed bugs. If possible, students should try to retrieve a sample bug with clear tape for the University contracted exterminator to examine.**

1. Exterminator should inspect the residence.

* While not required, students are encouraged to be present during the inspection by the exterminator.
* Students who report suspected bed bugs on a work day when the exterminator can be dispatched within 24 hours will be asked not to relocate to any other room until their room can be inspected by the University’s exterminator.  This is CRUCIAL so that we can prevent the spread of bed bugs if they are found to be in a student’s room and belongings.
* Students may not, at any time, deny the exterminator or Physical Plant staff access to their living spaces (including bedrooms, common area, kitchen, bathroom, etc.)
* Since bedbugs are treatable, Residential Life will not facilitate permanent room changes for these situations.

1. If the exterminator cannot find any evidence of bed bugs….

* The exterminator will not chemically treat the room if there is no evidence of bed bugs present; however, a glue board may be installed to monitor activity. The student will be asked to continue monitoring hir living space, and to notify Physical Plant immediately if there are further concerns.

1. If the exterminator confirms the presence of bed bugs….

* If the exterminator concludes that bed bugs are present in the residence, Physical Plant and Residential Life will provide the affected student(s) with a detailed list of instructions for the removal and laundering of their personal items.
* **The University relies on the assessment of the exterminator to identify signs of bed bugs in any residence.**
* Bed bugs are a serious community issue, and ALL students are expected to comply with instructions given to them within 24 hours once bed bugs have been confirmed within their living space.

**Bed Bug Treatment Checklist for Students**

**Steps to be taken by students if bed bugs have been confirmed in their residence:**

Bed bugs can travel in clothing, bags, backpacks, laptops, furniture—anything with small spaces to hide. **Therefore, all actions should be performed inside your room to prevent the spread of bed bugs.**

Backpacks should be treated as clothing. Personal electronics (i.e. cell phones, MP3 players, laptops) should be left on the desktop during treatment so they can be examined. Textbooks and study materials should also be left in your room (not bagged) during treatment. Check with your area coordinator if you have any questions about these instructions.

It is imperative that the following be done ***after*** the room has been inspected and the presence of bed bugs have been confirmed, but ***before*** room is treated:

All clothing, including items in your room, dresser and closet must be bagged and laundered. Along with that all bath linens, bedding, and soft luggage (duffle bags) must be bagged and laundered. Physical Plant will provide the bags necessary to accommodate these items.

Bring laundry bags immediately to laundry room and empty contents into the **dryer**. Immediately after unloading and starting laundry, dispose of plastic bags in a dumpster **outside** the building. Run the dryer on high heat for at least 20 minutes before washing; the dryer heat on campus is above 130º degrees, which is what is needed to kill them. Wash twice, in hot water, and dry on high heat. Place cleaned laundry in a **new** garbage bag. Do **NOT** unpack until given clearance to do so by an exterminator.

Items that are delicate or have the possibility of shrinking or color fading: put into a separate plastic bag clearly marked DRY CLEANING.

Clean up all clutter; remove all non-furniture items from under beds and discard cardboard boxes. Remember, clutter provides places for bugs to hide!

Take all items off the floor, including closet floors.

Move all items into center of room, at least two feet away from the walls.

Place any shoes or other small, non-washable items from your closet into a plastic garbage bag and tie the bag off. Leave this in your room until the exterminator treats the room.

Vacuum all carpet and furniture, making sure to clean all crevices and corners, make sure to get behind furniture, including bed headboard. Immediately dispose of vacuum bag in dumpster outside building.

Sweep and mop all floors, including under the bed.

Remove all open food.

Leave room for **at least 3 hours** following treatment by a professional exterminator.

***After*** room has been treated:

Vacuum daily and discard vacuum bags after each use.

A second treatment will be administered by the exterminator 7-10 days after the initial treatment.

Don’t mop floor or clean pesticide residue for at least 10 days after the final treatment.

Room will be inspected by exterminator 7-10 days after second treatment. A staff member will be present; students are again encouraged to be present. Follow-up will be determined as needed.

**Bed Bug FAQ**

**What are bed bugs?**

* Bed bugs are small nocturnal insects that live by feeding on the blood of humans and other warm-blooded hosts. After feeding for about five minutes, the bug returns to its hiding place.
* Bites consist of a raised red bump or flat welt, with slight irritation. 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 3-4 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?**

* Bed bugs 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 by the use of a pesticide, DDT. This is no longer used and may account for the resurgence of these bugs in the U.S., as might the increase in international travel.
* Anyone can pick bed bugs up from a location where they presently exist – someone’s apartment, other dorm rooms, movie theatres, etc. Bed bugs are equal opportunity pests – they will infest anyone, anywhere.

**What happens when the exterminator comes to my room?**

* If your room is confirmed to have bed bugs, a professional exterminator will come to treat your residence. You will be required to clean and bag all clothing, bedding, books and personal items prior to the treatment.
* The treatment will likely consist of a few different approaches:
  + A pesticide will be applied to locations within your room that may harbor the bugs.
  + The exterminator may place glue boards in your room. These boards can be good detectives and show the degree of success of the treatment. If the glue board collects bed bugs after its placement, then another treatment may be warranted. If this is the case, you should be back in touch with Physical Plant as soon as possible.

**If I plan to travel, what can I do to reduce my risk of bringing these bugs back with me?**

* First, look at the room to seek potential hiding places for bed bugs, such as carpet edges, mattress seams, pillow case linings, head boards, wall trim or other tiny crack-like places bed bugs might hide.
* Next, look specifically at the mattress seams for signs of bed bug activity: droppings, eggs, bloodstains or even bed bugs themselves – hiding in tiny folds and seam lines.
* Never leave your clothing on the bed, or any location of possible infestation. Instead, use hangers or hooks capable of keeping all cloth distant from the floor or bed. It’s also not a bad idea to elevate suitcases off the floor on a luggage stand, tabletop or other hard surface.
* Close your suitcase or travel bag when you're not using it. This way, during the night, the bugs may move over top of your luggage and have greater difficulty getting inside.
* Elevate your luggage off the floor to tables or chairs. These may also be hiding places, but are less likely.
* Keep any bed bug you find (intact if possible) to show Physical Plant.
* When you return from any travel (especially abroad) it is a good idea to take your suitcase to the laundromat so you can wash ALL items before taking the suitcase to your home, residence hall, etc. If you do your wash in hot water and dry it before entering your residence, you will stop the spread of these bugs.

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

* Notify Physical Plant ASAP.
* Be prepared to follow the written instructions **exactly**.

**What SHOULDN’T I do if I believe I have bed bugs?**

* Don’t panic! Although bed bugs can be annoying, they can be battled safely and successfully if you follow all guidelines given to you by Residential Life and Physical Plant.
* If you believe you have bed bugs, do NOT wait until after 5pm on Friday to notify someone. It is not possible to get service from the exterminator after hours.
* Do not apply pesticides on your own. Physical Plant hires a licensed exterminator to confirm the infestation and to develop an integrated pest management plan.
* Do not move your mattress or any furniture out into the hallway. Infested furniture can be cleaned and treated. Placing infested furniture (particularly mattresses) into common areas or on the street may simply spread bed bugs to the rooms of other students.
* Do not go to sleep in a friend’s room or in places off-campus. If you actually have bed bugs, you will only spread them to others.

*Adopted from Columbia University*