

Bed Bug in Service Workshop  
Hofstra University  
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District Attorney Kathleen Rice: She said that the bed bug problem is a public health issue throughout the nation Nassau County has a website for bed bugs.  
<http://www.nassaucountyny.gov/agencies/bedbugs/index.html>

Dr Gangloff-Kaufman Cornell University: Bed bugs are a 10 year old issue but we are now seeing bed bugs in homes and offices. Bed Bugs feed on blood. They are small but visible. A female adult is the size of an apple seed. Their fecal stains are the first things you will see. If you take a wet tissue or baby wipe and rub the area the brown residue left by the fecal stain will come up on the tissue. Bed bugs hide in crevices. . They can come out of the ceiling vents in apartments or apartment hallways. Bed bugs are attracted to clutter in the home. Bug bites are not sufficient evidence of a bed bug infestation. It is preferable to have stains of the actual bugs. . Bed bug introduction is usually when 1 or a small number migrate to a new area. Not all introductions of bed bugs result in an infestation. The definition of an infestation is when a mated female lays eggs and the eggs hatch grow feed and reproduce.

They are transported on personal belongings like a backpack or used bedding. In schools backpacks, coats and hats are the biggest treats. Elementary school students bring home the most bed bugs. Bed bugs are often found in hotels and hotel guests are a major source of transport of bed bugs. Bringing second hand goods such as a discarded mattress or other furniture into your home is dangerous because these goods may be infected with bed bugs.

Bed bugs do not carry disease. However the itchy or painful welts on the skin can cause anemia in the host. Bed bugs are also a trigger for childhood asthma. They can also cause fatigue from a lack of sleep. Stress anxiety depression and isolation occur when bed bugs are found in a home. After the bed bug infestation is eliminated some people suffer from imaginary itches.

Insecticides are not sufficient to control bed bugs because they are not as strong as they were years ago. Insecticides must be in direct contact with the bugs to kill them. Many bed bugs and most eggs can tolerate today's insecticides. People risk hurting themselves and others when they use more insecticide than needed.

Bed bugs are found where people are found. Bed bugs have downward mobility. Bed bugs are more of an issue for people who can least afford it. There is no funding source to help a poor tenant or homeowner get rid of bed bugs.

Tenants in multi family residences: Tenants should know how to identify bedbugs. If a tenant finds bed bugs in their apartment or a common area the problem should be reported to the landlord. If bed bugs are found the tenant should take the following precautions. Mattresses and box springs should be encased in bed bug proof covers. Infested items should be placed in plastic bags. Heat from a dryer that is at least 125 degrees will kill bed bugs. A meat thermometer left in the dryer for 2 minutes will give an accurate temperature reading. The items must be dried for at least 20 minutes. Linens, pillows, towels and plush toys can be placed in the dryer. Shoes can be placed in a mesh bag in the dryer.

Laundromat dryers are best. Items do not have to be washed first. If requested by the extermination company the tenant should be prepared to launder his/her bedding or clothing if required to treat the bugs. Tenants may be asked to organize their personal belongings and put them in airtight bags and containers. Tenants may be asked to move their belongings away from the walls if an exterminator is coming to treat the bed bugs.

Superintendents should be available to help tenants move heavy furniture and objects. Don't spray the bugs leave it to a professional. Common areas like laundry rooms transfer bed bugs. They should be cleaned often. The lint filters should be changed . If bed bugs are found in the lint filter put the clothes in that dryer in another dryer. Dry heat will kill bed bugs. Superintendents should help residents by educating them and assisting them in physically preparing them for the exterminator. Many older or disabled tenants may not be able to organize their apartments for an exterminator. There are bed bug preparation companies that can be hired to help tenants prepare for the exterminating company. Family can also be recruited to help. Community health workers can be hired to assist residents with bed bug problems. Don't throw out furniture destroy it if it has bugs. Owners of rental units should encourage the residents to come forward if there is a bed bug problem. Tenants should not be penalized for reporting a bed bug problem. Provide information to tenants about what evidence qualifies as positive bed bug identification. Owners should treat the bed bugs when they are found and do a follow up if necessary. Owners can consider heat treatment for tenants who have bed bug problems and live in low clutter homes. The rental office should be separated from other areas in the building.

Visitors should avoid sitting on plush furniture. If possible pocketbooks and coats should not be worn into an affected home. Keep an extra change of clothes in your car or office and put the clothes you wear into the apartment into a plastic bag. If you are undressing at home do so in the bathtub or on a white sheet so you can see the bed bugs. Bring all infected clothes to a laundromat and dry on high heat for 30 minutes.

The following do not kill bed bugs Gasoline, kerosene, thyme oil, leaving home, sleeping in a different room, buying a new mattress wrapping items in plastic and placing them in the sun. Putting items in a clear plastic bag in your car in the hot sun does work. Electric heaters set to 120-140 degrees do work

Jim Skinner A & C Pest Management

Bed bugs have no resistance to heat. Trained bed bug teams are 98% effective because they use canines. The fecal matter of bed bugs looks like dried blood.

NESDCA, National Entomology Scent Detection Canine Association (NESDCA), is the national association. Bed bugs must be sprayed directly with pesticide. Pesticide may not be 100% effective. Steam cleans instantly but it only penetrates 1inch into fabric.

Panel of Attorneys

NY courts are very friendly to tenants regarding the warrant of habitability. Landlords are required to keep apartments free of vermin including bed bugs. Landlords are legally obligated to take care of bed bugs in tenants' apartments. Tenants are liable if they caused the problem but if the bed bugs have spread to other apartments the landlord is responsible for the other apartments. Leases should be written to say that the tenant must notify the landlord immediately of a bed bug problem. The lease should say that the tenant is responsible for cooperating with the landlord to eradicate bed bugs.

The attorney from the Nassau County Department of Health said that there is no statutory law that deals with bed bugs. The sanitary code does not deal with bed bugs until there is a communicable disease and bed bugs do not cause communicable diseases. . New York State is trying to come up with regulations as to the responsibilities of landlords and tenants. There is no state law on taking action to prevent bed bugs. The Nassau County Public Health ordinance covers bed bugs. Bed bugs are defined as a general nuisance. There is a requirement for landlords to exterminate bed bugs. In multiple family residences landlord must provide extermination for bed bugs. The landlord has an affirmative duty to eradicate bed bugs in all apartments in multi family residences. If there are continuous complaints the landlord must take steps to eradicate at each complaint. Tenant has a responsibility to remove clutter and to cooperate with the landlord. The health department can start an enforcement case against a landlord or tenant. It takes a long time to bring a case to closure i.e. 3-6 months. The department of health can close a building if an infestation is out of control. If a tenant is uncooperative or is responsible for the bed bug problem an action can be brought against the tenant. A landlord of a multi family dwelling must provide general extermination. Landlords say that general exterminating does not cover bed bugs. If a building has bed bugs incoming tenants must be notified. If the landlord does not disclose the existence of bed bugs to an incoming tenant the tenant can nullify the lease and leave.