

Homeowner/Landlord

Information for:

“Bed Bugs”

Bed Bug Forum

June 19, 2017

INSECTS AND RODENTS: WHO'S RESPONSIBLE?

OWNER RESPONSIBLE

- Common spaces free from animal (including insect) infestation.
- Building structurally sound so animals don't get in.
- Infestation in more than one unit

RENTER RESPONSIBLE

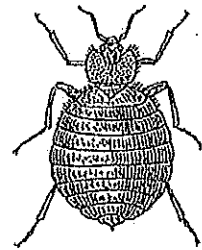
- Infestation in only their unit
- Infestation in single family home
(unless pre-existing at move in)

If an exterminator can determine unit of origin, tenant can be held financially responsible.

A WORD ON BED BUGS

Bed bugs are small insects that feed on human blood. They are usually active at night when people are sleeping. Bed bugs bite - but do not transmit disease. Bed bugs painlessly feed on their host, injecting a tiny amount of saliva in the process, which can result in mild to severe allergic reactions. **Because they do not carry or transmit disease, they are not covered under VT law as a reason to withhold rent**

Bedbugs have become increasingly common since the banning of hazardous pesticides such as DDT. They are not the product of poor hygiene or bad housekeeping. They can happen to anyone, anywhere. They are however, a Rental Housing Health Code violation just like any other pest. Renters have a legal responsibility to not introduce them into the rental unit as well as a responsibility to participate in the extermination process. Just extermination will not solve the infestation, there are multiple actions required to eliminate bed bugs from a dwelling that require cooperation from the renter.



A RENTER'S RESPONSIBILITIES DURING BED BUG EXTERMINATION

Follow all instructions given by the Extermination Company contracted by the owner to do the work. This will include tasks such as:

- Clean and organize living area
- Reduce clutter
- Bag and remove bedding and clothes
- Use HOT dryer for 30 minutes for plush toys, shoes, coats, curtains, backpacks, etc.
- Isolate clean items until bed bugs are gone
- Consider getting mattress and pillow covers
- Scrub mattress seams with stiff brush
- Vacuum mattresses, bed frames, furniture, floors, and carpets - especially around bed and furniture posts
- Put vacuum cleaner bag in a sealed plastic bag immediately after vacuuming
- Dispose of sealed bag in outside container
- Clean linens, curtains, rugs, carpets, and clothes
- Wash and dry bedding and clothes on the hottest settings

It is not necessary to throw out furniture and mattresses. They should be treated as part of the extermination work.

AVOIDING GETTING AND SPREADING BED BUGS

- Inspect luggage after traveling.
- Wash donated clothing on hottest setting before wearing.
- Do not pick up discarded items on the street.
- Inspect any used furniture or other purchases.
- Wrap infested items in plastic before discarding.
- Deface infested items to prevent reuse.
- Label discarded items "infested with bed bugs" to prevent reuse.

BEST PRACTICES FOR RENTERS

- You can be held financially responsible for causing an infestation.
- Do not pick up "Free" furniture or cloth items left by the roadside.
- If you travel, check your accommodations upon arrival and check your suitcases carefully before returning.
- Only buy used items from dealers who "pre-treat" them before sale.
- Report any bed bugs or other insects and rodents to the owner immediately.
- If the owner does not address the problem, contact your Town Health Officer or City Code Enforcement Offices immediately.

BEST PRACTICES FOR OWNERS

- Owners have a responsibility to respond promptly when notified of any infestation, including bed bugs and ensure correct extermination procedures are taken.
- Use a professional. Spraying on your own just spreads the problem to other units.

STRUCTURAL ELEMENTS

Structural elements must be maintained in good working order and condition. They should be weather tight, watertight and rodent proof.

Property must also be maintained to be free from the regular or periodic appearance of standing water or excessive moisture which may result in visible mold growth.

- Foundation
- Staircases
- Floors
- Walls
- Ceilings
- Chimneys
- Doors
- Windows
- Roof

TENANT/RESIDENT RESPONSIBILITIES

As part of the inspection, it is the tenant/resident(s) responsibility to ensure that the premise is free of trash or clutter.

#1.) THERE SHOULD NOT BE ANY CLOTHING ON THE FLOOR, BEDS, COUCHES OR CHAIRS. IT SHOULD BE PICKED UP & EITHER PUT AWAY IN DRESSERS OR CLOSETS. DIRTY LAUNDRY SHOULD BE IN LAUNDRY BASKETS OR A HAMPER.

#2.) THERE SHOULD NOT BE ANYTHING STORED ON TOP OF CLOTHES DRESSERS.

#3.) THERE SHOULD NOT BE ANYTHING ON TOP OF BEDS, SHEETS & BLANKETS SHOULD BE REMOVED.

#4.) THERE SHOULD NOT BE ANY GARBAGE IN THE APARTMENT OTHER THAN IN A TRASH RECEPTICLE. RECYCLING SHOULD BE DISPOSED OF PROPERLY PRIOR TO INSPECTION.

#5.) SHOES & PERSONAL BELONGINGS SHOULD BE PUT AWAY OR STORED NEATLY IN A DESIGNATED AREA.

#6.) ALL FOOD & DISHES SHOULD BE PUT IN CABINETS OR A PANTRY.

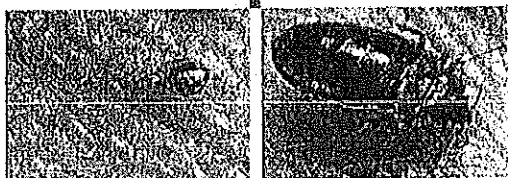
#7.) BEDS SHOULD BE FREE OF ANY CLUTTER, NO TOYS ON THEM & NOTHING STORED UNDERNEATH THEM. ALL BEDDING (SHEETS & BLANKETS) SHOULD BE REMOVED.

#8.) CHILDREN'S TOYS SHOULD BE PICKED UP & PUT AWAY IN EITHER TOY BOXES OR NEATLY STORED IN THEIR BEDROOMS, NOT SPREAD THROUGHOUT THE HOUSE.

#9.) BASEBOARD AREAS SHOULD BE FREE OF ANY CLUTTER. NO PERSONAL BELONGINGS (SUCH AS CLOTHING) STORED UP AGAINST THEM.

#10.) FLOORS SHOULD BE VACUMMED OR SWEPT & MOPPED PRIOR TO INSPECTION.

**** THIS IS FOR THE INSPECTION PART OF THIS SERVICE. IT WILL BE SIMILAR FOR THE TREATMENT WITH A FEW ADJUSTMENTS TO BE MADE. ****



Treating Bed Bugs: Recommendations for Homeowners

What's the problem with bed bugs and pesticides?

Over the past 20 years, more and more homes, hotels, schools and other settings have been affected by bed bugs. This has been happening across the country and in Vermont, too. At the same time, there have been many more reports of people being exposed to harmful levels of chemicals due to spills and misuse of pesticides to treat bed bugs. From 2006 to 2010, the National Pesticide Information Center received reports of pesticides being misused to treat bed bugs that resulted in 129 mild or serious health effects, including one death.

Bed bugs are not a health hazard, but pesticides used to treat them can be.

Bed bugs can be a big pest in the home, but they are not a health hazard. Bed bugs do not spread disease. Bed bug bites mostly cause red or white itchy bumps on the skin. However, misuse of pesticides to get rid of bed bugs can be dangerous for you, your family and pets.

USE EXTREME CAUTION when using pesticides to treat bed bugs.

There are many things to consider in managing a bed bug situation, including the life cycle and habits of bed bugs. If chemical treatment (pesticides) is part of the overall management plan, **DO NOT MISUSE** pesticides. Non-chemical treatments – such as steam cleaning, heat treatments, vacuuming and laundering – should be used in combination with chemical treatments to limit the amount of pesticides used in the home. The Health Department recommends that you hire a licensed, experienced pest management professional (applicator) to treat your home.

If you hire a professional applicator:

- *Check* with the Agency of Agriculture, Food & Markets that the applicator is currently licensed and certified to apply pesticides in Vermont:
- <http://npic.orst.edu/mlrDetail.html?lang=en&to=SPE&state=VT#statePesticide>
- *Check* references. Treating bed bugs is difficult. Make sure the applicator has experience in dealing with these situations.
- *Make sure* that the applicator provides a comprehensive strategy for eliminating the bed bugs in all areas of your home.
- *Reduce* the need for pesticide applications by combining with non-chemical treatment methods such as cleaning, laundering and heat treatments.
- *Check* with the Agency of Agriculture, Food & Markets that the pesticide being used in your home is registered for use in Vermont: <http://www.kellysolutions.com/VT/pesticideindex.htm>
- *Read* and understand the label of product to be used by the applicator.

If you apply a pesticide without professional help in your home:

- *DO NOT USE foggers* (or "bug bombs"). They are not effective against bed bugs.
- *Buy only* pesticides that are labeled, have an EPA registration number *and* are in the original unopened containers.
- *Never use* a pesticide labeled for outside use inside your home.
- *Make sure* the pesticide you are using is registered for use against bed bugs in Vermont. Check with the Agency of Agriculture: <http://www.kellysolutions.com/VT/pesticideindex.htm>
- *Read, understand and follow* all instructions on the product label. Not following the label instructions can harm the health of your family, your pets, and you. It can also result in contamination of your home, which can be expensive and time consuming to clean up.
- *If you have questions* about how to mix or dilute a product based on the label, be sure to get proper instructions.
- *Do not apply* pesticides to beds or furniture unless the label allows it.
- *Do not apply* pesticides repeatedly or in excess of label directions. More is not better and may be unsafe for your family.
- *Do not use* other household chemicals such as kerosene, rubbing alcohol, or bleach for pest control. These can be dangerous to health, and can cause fires or explosions.

If you think you have been overexposed to a pesticide, or feel sick after a pesticide has been used in your home, call the poison control center (800-222-1222) or your doctor immediately.

MORE INFORMATION –

Vermont Department of Health
800-439-8550 (in VT)
www.healthvermont.gov/prevent/bedbugs

Centers for Disease Control & Prevention
Health Advisory: Misuse of Bed Bug Control Chemicals
<http://www.bt.cdc.gov/HAN/han00336.aspx>

Northern New England Poison Center
1-800-222-1222

EPA Registered Products for Homeowners
<http://cfpub.epa.gov/opppref/bedbug>

Vermont Agency of Agriculture, Food & Markets
AGR.Agrichemical@state.vt.us
802-828-2430

National Pesticide Information Center
1-800-858-7378
<http://npic.orst.edu/pest/bedbug.html>

The Health Effects of Bed Bugs

Although bed bugs and their bites are a nuisance, they are not known to spread disease.

Bed bug bites can be very itchy and irritating. Most welts heal in a few days but in unusual cases, the welt may persist for several weeks. Usually an anti-itching ointment will help, but if bites become infected, people should see their doctor.

The anxiety about being bitten can lead to sleeplessness, which can affect one's wellbeing. Properly and effectively responding to bed bugs helps to keep anxiety in check.

Some people become so desperate that they use illegal or excessive amounts of pesticides that can lead to poisonings. This guide provides advice on how to get rid of bed bugs safely.

Preventing Bed Bugs From

Bed bugs can enter homes by latching onto used furniture, luggage and clothing, and by traveling along connecting pipes and wiring.

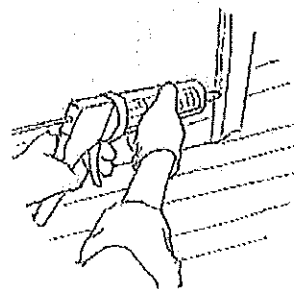
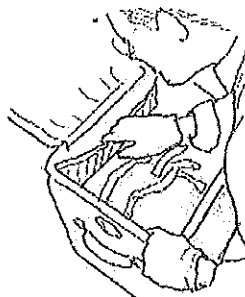
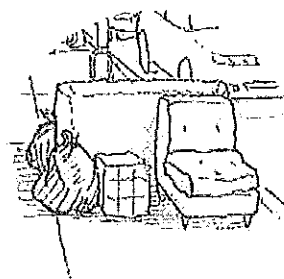
Never bring bed frames, mattresses, box springs or upholstered furniture found on the street into your home.

Check all used or rented furniture for bed bugs.

When traveling, inspect the bed and furniture. Keep suitcases off the floor and bed, and inspect them before you leave.

If you suspect you have been around bed bugs, immediately wash and dry your clothing on hot settings or store it in a sealed plastic bag until you can.

Seal cracks and crevices with caulk, even if you don't have bed bugs. This will help prevent bed bugs and other pests from coming in.



Inspection for Bed Bugs

Look for bed bugs, blood stains, droppings and eggs (a flashlight and a magnifying glass will help). Start by looking in an area 10-20 feet around where you sleep or sit. That's the distance a bed bug will usually travel. Keep a written record of every room and location where you find signs of bed bugs. Share this record with a pest control professional.



Check mattresses, box springs, bed frames and bedding

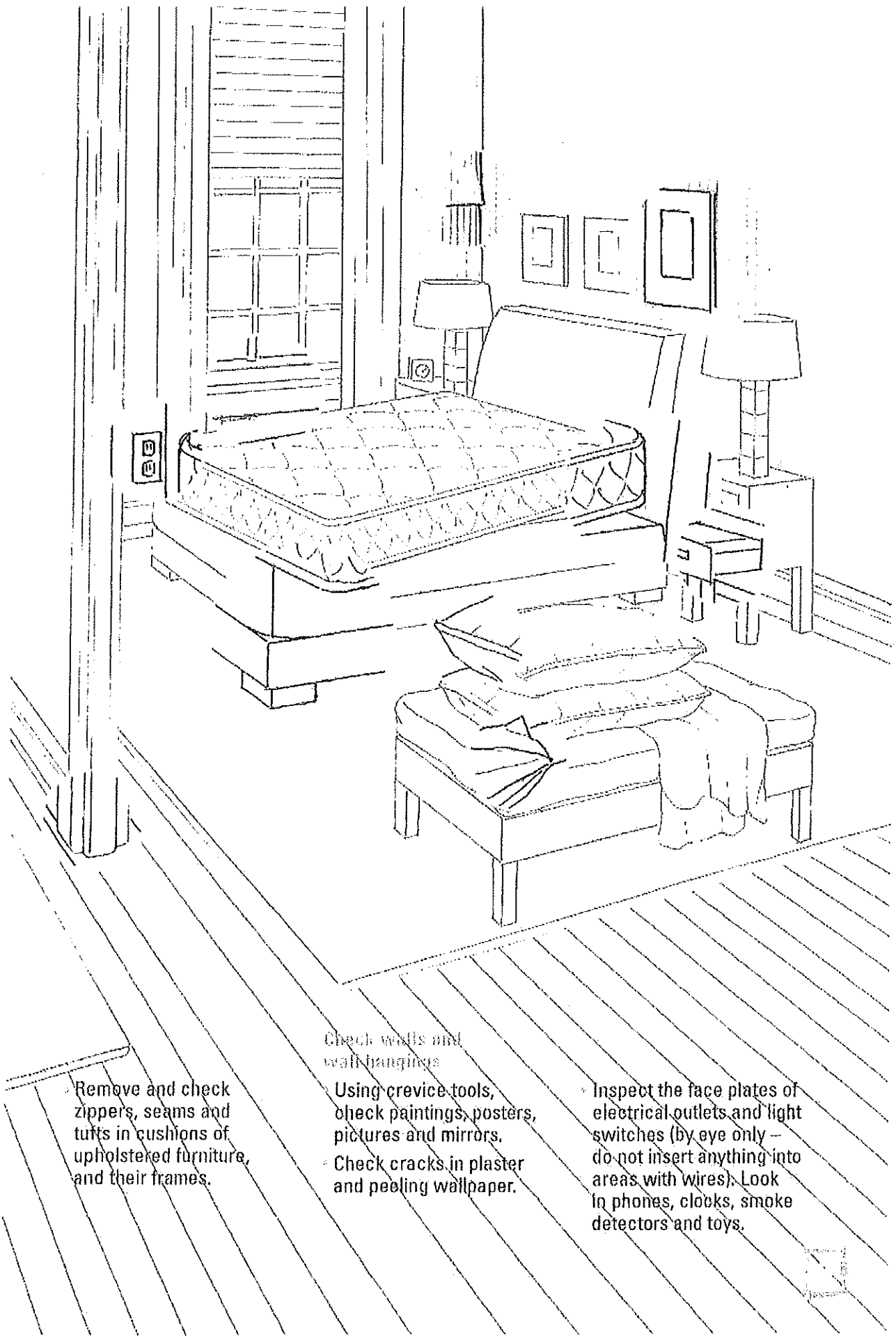
- Check the top and bottom seams, tufts and any rips in the covers of mattresses and box springs.
- Look underneath the bed and along the bed frame and headboards.

Check cracks and crevices in bedroom furniture, floor boards and baseboards, windows and door frames

- Use a flash light to inspect cracks and crevices of furniture, windows and door frames.
- Swipe a putty knife, an old subway or playing card into cracks and crevices to force bed bugs out. A hot blow dryer on a low setting will

also work. If live bugs do come out, crush them with a paper towel and throw them away outside your building.

- Remove drawers from furniture and check the inside, top and bottom, joints and even screw holes.



Remove and check zippers, seams and tufts in cushions of upholstered furniture, and their frames.

Check walls and wall hangings

Using crevice tools, check paintings, posters, pictures and mirrors.

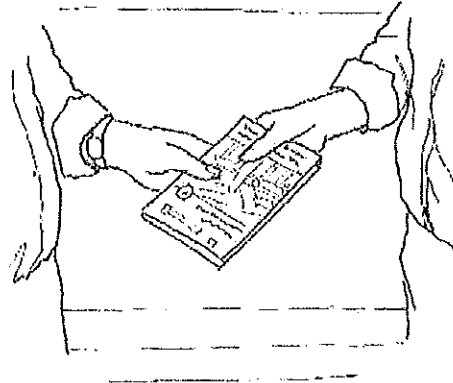
Check cracks in plaster and peeling wallpaper.

Inspect the face plates of electrical outlets and light switches (by eye only – do not insert anything into areas with wires). Look in phones, clocks, smoke detectors and toys.

Provide tenants with information about bed bugs. Share this guide.

Encourage everyone to report bed bugs as soon as they know of a problem.

Notify tenants, and inspect all units adjacent to, above and below apartments found to have bed bugs.



Hire a pest management professional to treat for bed bugs. Be wary of companies that make unrealistic claims that bed bugs can be controlled with one visit.

Help tenants if they cannot move furniture themselves or need help to get rid of clutter.

Give advance notice of the planned use of pesticides.

Inspect upon vacancy and if necessary treat units to ensure they have no bed bugs or other pests before renting.

