

# INFORMATION SHEET

## Bed Bugs

### **How to identify bed bugs?**

Adult bed bugs are reddish brown, about 5 mm long and oval in shape. Juvenile bugs can also be much smaller. You can identify an infestation by looking for insects in the cracks and crevices of the mattress, the protective corner on the box spring and any other small dark crevice close to the insects' food source.

During an infestation, you are also likely to see fecal matter (small brownish dust), unexplained blood stains and skin castings of molted insects in the same areas of the mattress.

### **How to avoid the spread**

It is absolutely imperative that you report any suspected bed bug infestation as soon as possible. They are "hitch-hikers" and can travel throughout the building very easily on your belongings and your clothing as you come and go from your unit. Unreported infestations can spread to adjoining units and common element hallways.

Once the Condominium Corporation is advised of an infestation, inspections will be scheduled in all adjoining units (on both sides, above and below) to determine whether the infestation has spread and decide on the best course of action.

It is important to note that there are stringent regulations with respect to pesticide application. The Condominium Corporation retains the services of an insured, reputable and licensed professional pest control contractor. It is very important that you not attempt to treat an infestation yourself or through the help of a third party pest control contractor. Bed bugs will easily form a resistance to the chemical sprays used to eradicate them. Therefore, every failed attempt to get rid of them increases their resistance.

### **How are bed bug infestations treated?**

Bed bugs are very hardy and require a thorough and detailed treatment in order to eradicate them. A residual pesticide is meticulously applied and must cover every crack and crevice of your home. Most treatments take 2-4 hours to complete.

### **How do you prepare your unit for a pesticide application?**

Most people start with discarding the infected mattress. If you choose to buy a new mattress, it is very important to insure that it remains in the plastic they are wrapped in with all holes sealed until the treatment is complete.

Unit preparation must be done meticulously to ensure the application of pesticide reaches every nook and cranny of your unit. Specifically you must:

1- Get rid of the contaminated mattress and box spring. Make sure any items removed from your unit are encased in a SEALED PLASTIC BAG to ensure that live bugs and eggs do not spread to the common areas of the building during transport.

2- Get rid of any sofas and chairs if there is evidence that bed bugs have infested these items; Make sure any items removed from your unit are encased in a SEALED PLASTIC BAG to ensure that live bugs and eggs do not spread to the common areas of the building during transport .

Empty the contents of all dressers, closets, tables, shelving units, storage areas.

3- Wash and DRY on a hot setting, all linens, clothing, coats, towels, cushions (and any other soft fabric type items in the apartment). Store all washed and dried items in SEALED bags immediately to prevent re-infection.

4- Any items that cannot be washed and dried on a hot cycle (such as shoes, belts, jewelry, books, etc may be placed in your freezer for a minimum of one (1) week to kill live bugs and eggs.

5- Any items in your unit (other than furniture) that cannot either be washed and dried on a hot cycle or frozen for a period of one week must be either discarded or placed in a sealed plastic bag to prevent the spread of live bugs or the hatching of eggs that may be on such items. Don't forget your electronic equipment, radios, clocks, TV, etc. They are all excellent hiding places for bugs to take refuge in during a pesticide application. They all must be placed in sealed plastic bags.

6- This is a very good time to PURGE your unit of all unwanted and unnecessary items, live bugs and eggs will hide in the unnecessary clutter. Make sure any items removed from your unit are encased in a SEALED PLASTIC BAG to ensure that live bugs and eggs do not spread to the common areas of the building during transport.

Please be aware that all of your remaining furniture including sofas, chairs, bed frames, tables, dressers, etc will be turned upside down to treat the underside. (This is where the majority of eggs will be hidden).

**As you may have guessed – the work involved in preparing your unit is arduous and has to be done quickly to allow for pesticide application ASAP. You may seriously wish to consider retaining the help of a reputable firm that specializes in this type of work. Please see the Resident Building Manager should you require a referral in this matter.**

#### **What about safety?**

Bed bug treatment is one of the most intensive chemical applications being performed. Everyone must be out of the home for a minimum of 4 hours after the treatment is completed (although preferably 24 hours if your health is compromised, if you are pregnant, if you have small children or elderly people in your home). Pets must also be removed from the unit.

**Is there a warranty on treatment?**

If you have followed all preparation procedures to the letter, the Corporation's contractor provides a three month/one time re-treat warranty. All well prepared customers have managed to gain control with this program.

**What is the average cost of treatment?**

The average cost to treat a unit ranges from \$300 - \$900 per unit depending on the level of infestation. In accordance with the Condominium Act, the Corporation's Declaration and By Laws, cost of treating your unit is the responsibility of the unit owner.

**What if the residual pesticide applications don't work?**

An alternate method of treatment may be used. The most effective secondary treatment is super-heating the unit. This is done by having a contractor place large industrial heaters and fans in your unit to bring the unit temperature above 45 degrees Celsius for more than 60 minutes. The average cost of super heating a unit is between \$2500 and \$3000.

**What are the legal ramifications?**

Unit Owners / Residents who do not comply with unit preparation guidelines or who fail to provide access to the unit for a scheduled pesticide treatment will be charged the cost of the pest control contractor's missed visit, regardless of whether the unit is the source of the infestation or not

Such unit owners will then also be subject to any and all of the Corporation's legal fees to obtain a compliance order.

Please also note that the Corporation is required to disclose on Status Certificates whether a unit has been the subject of a recent infestation, and if so whether treatment has been successful.

**Further Information**

**Further information on bed bugs can be obtained at the City of Ottawa website or at [www.Ottawavalleyipc.com](http://www.Ottawavalleyipc.com) or [www.thermapure.com](http://www.thermapure.com) at [www.bedbugsinfo.ca/](http://www.bedbugsinfo.ca/)**