

Rockford Housing Authority

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 by the use of a pesticide, DDT. This is no longer used and may account for the resurgence of these bugs in the US as might 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 Property Manager – As-soon-as-possible.
- Be prepared to follow the written instructions **to the letter** and in a timely manner (within 24 hours).
- Whenever possible, limit your activity in common areas. This will help prevent transference.

What SHOULDN'T I do if 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 the Housing Authority and Pest Control Company.
- **Do Not** discard any items from your apartment without first speaking with the property manager. If removal of items is necessary the property manager will give instruction on how to properly discard.

Bed Bug Policy

The staff of the Rockford 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 Rockford Housing Authority Units, our staff will adhere to the following guidelines:

1. As soon as a resident suspects that he/she may have bed bugs, they should contact the Property Manager. If another Housing Authority Staff Member learns of a potential bed bug problem, their first call should be to the Property Manager.
2. The Property Manager 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. It is recommended that resident contact the Property Manager as early on a regular business day as possible. The exterminator cannot be dispatched on weekends or holidays.

Once notice is received, by the Property Manager, residents may not, at any time, deny the exterminator or Housing Authority Staff access to the unit. Refusal to allow exterminator to exterminate and/or failure to comply with instructions necessary to exterminate will result in the tenant being charged **\$100.00 for the cost of the exterminator call.**

3. 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 Rockford Housing Authority immediately if there are further problems.
- If the exterminator concludes that bed bugs are present in the unit, the Rockford 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.
4. 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.
 5. **Insecticides alone won't 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 lease infraction and your lease may be terminated.**

Rockford Housing Authority

Bed Bug Extermination Checklist

The Rockford Housing Authority has contracted a certified pest control company to exterminate the bed bugs from your unit. However, the success of this process depends on you and your family's complete cooperation. Below is a list of your responsibilities that **MUST** be completed before the pest control company can begin the extermination process.

NOTE: If RHA has to remove garbage in bulk (mattresses, furniture, car parts, ect.) from the property, charges will be the cost incurred by RHA to bring items to City dump.

Your unit is scheduled to be treated on the date below. The checklist must be completed by that date! If there is some reason that you can't have the check list complete by the below date please let us know immediately.

Date	Time
Your Unit will be Treated By:	

Completed ✓	Items to be complete by the resident
	Strip the bed(s) and launder all sheets, pillowcases, mattress pads, and blankets.
	Remove everything from bedroom closet(s) and place in plastic bags.
	Remove everything from dresser drawers, nightstands, and dressing tables and place in plastic bags.
	Have all clothing and fabrics laundered or dry-cleaned.
	Remove drapes and have them, laundered, dry-cleaned, or replaced.
	Discard cardboard boxes, shoeboxes, paper and plastic bags, old newspapers, stacks of magazines, and similar items in the infested rooms.
	Vacuum all infested rooms. Also vacuum mattresses, bedsprings, couches, chairs, closets and closet shelves, shoes, inside dresser drawers, and bedside table drawers. Vacuum bags are to be placed in a plastic bag and discarded.

Important Notes

❖ Discarding of any compromised (ripped/torn) materials or heavily infested item may be required.
❖ Dismantling of bed frames and other items will be performed as part of the service program.
❖ Should the box spring remain, removal of the cheesecloth underside is required for proper inspection and/or application.
❖ Zippered mattress bags will be used. Mattresses can be used (back on the bed frame) but must remain in these bags for at least thirty (30) days. Linens are to go over the bags.
❖ If laundering, a hot water & detergent cycle + dryer must be used.
❖ A clutter free environment must be provided in order to allow access for the service technician to treat all of the needed areas.
❖ Before removing all bagged items the resident should inspect for pest activity.
❖ The resident should not touch or move any monitoring device.
❖ Insecticide treatments MUST NOT be performed by the resident.

By my signature below I certify that I have read, understand, and have fully completed the above checklist. **Failure to fully cooperate may result in the termination of my lease.**

Resident Signature	Date

ROCKFORD HOUSING AUTHORITY

BEDBUG CONTROL & INFORMATION BROCHURE

Address

City, State, Zip

Phone



Questions As A Rockford Housing Authority Resident

What are bedbugs?

Bedbugs are small, brownish, flattened insects that feed solely on blood. Adult bedbugs are about 3/16-inch long and reddish-brown, with oval, flattened bodies. They are sometimes mistaken for ticks or cockroaches. They cannot jump or fly. However, bedbugs are skilled climbers. Some studies show that they climb great heights in order to drop themselves down to lower surfaces that were otherwise inaccessible to them.

What are the habits of bedbugs?

Bedbugs are active mainly at night and prefer to hide close to where they feed. They can crawl several feet to obtain a blood meal. Bedbugs hide during the day in dark, protected sites. They prefer fabric, wood, and paper surfaces. Bedbugs often crawl upward to hide in pictures, wall hangings, drapery pleats, loosened wallpaper, cracks in plaster, and ceiling moldings during the day. Bedbugs initially can be found about tufts, seams, and folds of mattresses, later spreading to crevices in the bedstead or throughout the bedroom. In heavier infestations, they also may occupy hiding places farther from the bed.

How do I know if I have bedbugs?

A bedbug infestation can be recognized by blood stains from crushed bugs or by rusty (sometimes dark) spots of excrement on sheets and mattresses, bed clothes, and walls. Fecal spots, eggshells, and shed skins may be found in the surrounding area of their hiding places. An offensive, sweet, musty odor from their scent glands may be detected when bedbug infestations are severe. You may or may not have signs of bites on your body.

Can bedbugs carry diseases?

The Center for Disease Control and Prevention reports that bedbugs can NOT give humans a disease. People may have an allergic reaction to the bite.

What do I need to do if I think I have bedbugs in the unit?

Contact the Property Management Office to set up an inspection. **DO NOT** try to eliminate the problem alone or without our assistance. It is a very serious matter and a certified pest control provider needs to conduct extermination.

Has the pest control person been trained to treat for bedbugs?

Yes, the pest control person is trained and will work with the Housing Authority Property Management Office and you to make certain that all pests are removed from the unit.

What can I do to make sure I do not get bedbugs in the unit?

1. **Do Not** pick up mattress or other furniture from the side of the road, other apartments or from dump sites.
2. If you purchase or rent used furniture or mattresses, inspect them carefully for signs of bedbugs.
3. Inspect and wash in hot soapy water clothing purchased from consignment stores or second hand stores.
4. Because we know that bedbugs are an increasing problem, it is important and necessary to inspect any location away from home where you are planning to sleep.
5. Take steps to try to avoid picking up bedbugs from hotels, motels or any other sources when you or your family members travel, even to local destinations.
6. Consider purchasing a special mattress cover (encasement) for your beds. Rather than purchasing a cover to place on top of the mattress, purchase one that actually zips around it entirely and seals up the inside - meaning no bugs are getting in or out.

7. If you believe your mattress is infested you may want to consider throwing it away. **Do Not** leave it on the porch, in the yard, or at the curb as it could create infestation with your neighbors. Take it to the city dumpster or call the Property Management Office for instructions on how to remove.
8. It is much easier to control the problem when the infestation is small. Keep clutter down, so it is easier to inspect and bed bugs have fewer hiding places.
9. Wash your bedding, including pillows and comforters weekly and dry them on high for at least 60 minutes.
10. Bedbugs can come in with a guest, latching on to luggage and clothes. Take extra caution when you have guest spend the night at the unit.
11. Remove old furniture that is not used.
12. Vacuum the floors weekly and use a vacuum tool to clean the baseboards in the unit.
13. Wash and inspect your children's book bags and jackets weekly.

Note: If you have a problem with pest in your unit, contact the Property Management Office.

What do I need to do if I believe I have bedbugs in the unit?

1. Don't panic. It is not life threatening and bedbugs do not carry diseases.
2. Contact the Property Management Office as soon as possible and we will schedule an inspection with a qualified pest control provider.
3. **Do not** have guest come spend the night. Once the guest returns home, they could unknowingly carry bedbugs from your apartment and infest their homes.
4. **Do not** discard any items from your home before speaking with the property manager
5. Once the inspection is completed, the Property Management Office will notify you of the results.

If it is determine that I have bedbugs in the unit, what will I have to do?

1. The Property Management Office will schedule an appointment for treatment as soon as possible. Generally within 5 to 7 business days.
2. You will be given a "Bedbug Preparation Checklist" which will instruct you on how to prepare for the treatment. You will be asked to certify and sign that you have completed the tenant responsibilities on the checklist.
3. On the day of the treatment, you need to make sure that all bedding is removed from the bed, all the curtains removed from the windows and washed/dried the day of the treatment. If this is not done, you could very well infest the unit again.
4. If you do not have a washer and dryer in the unit take your belongings to a Laundromat or the property facility. Place them in a sealed plastic bag as you travel to the Laundromat. If you fail to place them in a plastic bag, you could infest your automobile or common areas.
5. You will need to be present when the pest control provider arrives at the unit. However, after he/she gives you additional instructions, you and your family members will need to leave the apartment during the treatment process. Generally, you will be able return home within 4 hours.
6. Once the treatment is completed, continue to monitor the bed and apartment for signs that bedbugs are still present.
7. **Do not** use any other types of insecticides (Raid or Powder) after the treatment has been completed.
8. We will do a follow up inspection and a counseling session within 7 days after the initial treatment.

Remember! Getting rid of bedbugs is a team effort! It will require your cooperation and you will be required to assist us and the pest control provider eliminating them from your home.