

## **PREVENTION AND SAFE REMOVAL OF BEDBUGS**

Bedbug infestations have become a serious problem in housing throughout the country. Public housing properties are not immune to this problem. Anyone or any home can get bedbugs. A bedbug is a small (about the size of an apple seed), flat, reddish-brown bug. Bedbugs live on human and animal blood and typically hide and live in cracks and crevices in dark and undisturbed locations close to their hosts. They can live for long periods of time and although visible to the naked eye, they may be difficult to detect. Bedbugs are not picky about their environment, whether clean or dirty, so it makes it very difficult to prevent them. Bedbugs tend to hide during the day and come out during the night in order to feed. During the day, bedbugs hide in mattresses, box springs, bed frames, headboards, under peeling paint, loose wallpaper, under carpeting near baseboards, upholstered furniture, switch plates and under clutter.

The following plan is provided to assist in keeping bedbugs from housing authority property:

### **BEDBUG PREVENTION ACTION PLAN**

- \* Inspect in and around sleeping and resting areas at home once a month.
- \* Look for signs of bedbug activity, active infestations will have fecal spotting, live or dead bedbugs, shed skins and bedbug eggs. Check for speckling (digested blood).
- \* Avoid used furniture and mattresses, especially discarded furniture and mattresses. Used furniture and refurbished mattresses may have bedbugs and bedbug eggs that are difficult to see.
- \* Inspect for the signs of bedbugs when traveling away from home. Look for live or dead bedbugs, shed skins or eggs and fecal spots on mattresses, clothing or dark cracks and crevices. Wood, metal or plastic furniture, sofas, chairs, tables and many other items may be infested with bedbugs.
- \* If contact with an active bedbug infestation is suspected away from home, segregate and isolate in sealed plastic bags any exposed luggage, clothing and personal effects until inspection and decontamination can be completed.
- \* Bedbugs prefer to live in cracks and crevices in areas like baseboards, moldings, window/door frames, and cracks/seams in walls and furniture, especially headboards and bed frames and screw holes.
- \* Encase mattresses and box springs. Seal box springs and mattresses in an appropriate zippered encasement to prevent bedbugs hiding inside from escaping; this location is commonly affected in bedbug infestations and yet difficult to inspect.
- \* Thoroughly vacuum apartment, furniture and all belongings and use crevice tools and other attachments where possible. Place the contents of the vacuum in a tightly sealed disposable bag and remove.
- \* Clutter is a friend of bedbugs. Keep clutter to an absolute minimum in the unit.

### **EARLY DETECTION IS CRITICAL**

Early identification and reporting of infestations by tenants to building management limit's the spread of bedbugs. As soon as possible, contact the main office if activity is suspected. The longer you wait the more likely the problem will spread and become more difficult and costly to control. Willful failure to report timely is a violation of the lease and may result in adverse action up to and including eviction.

### **TREATING BITES**

Bedbug bites can look like other bites such as mosquito bites. Bedbug bites are small, reddish bumps with a small dark center and they occur in a cluster or a row. They often look like a rash and can be itchy. You may experience hives, itching and blister; however, many people have no reaction to the bites at all. If you experience a severe allergic reaction, then see a doctor. If the bites are not severe, simply wash the area with a mild soap and warm water. Then apply a skin cream containing hydrocortisone. You may also want to take an oral antihistamine, such as Benadryl, to relieve the itch. Of course, anytime you have questions about medicine, contact your Doctor. We are not medical professionals. The main thing is don't worry, studies show that bedbugs do not carry diseases. However, if a bedbug is squished, the blood that comes out may not be your own, so please be careful when dealing with squished bugs and bloody areas. Wash hands well with soap and warm water after handling.