

Don't Spread Bed Bugs

Bed bugs are small, brownish, flattened insects that feed on human blood. While not life-threatening, bed bug infestations can negatively affect a person's quality of life. They "hitchhike" from place to place on clothing, furniture, luggage and more. It can be easy to pick up the bugs or their eggs in one location and carry them to another, where they will hide and keep breeding, spreading the problem.

Once a residence is infested with bed bugs, it can be difficult to get rid of them. Thus, the best defense is to do all we can to prevent their spread in the first place. Any worker who visits consumers in their homes or apartments must be vigilant to prevent spreading bed bugs to the work place and other homes, including their own.



Be Prepared

Before a home visit, ask the client if he or she is having or recently has had the home treated for roaches or bed bugs. If available, check for a list of buildings in your area with known infestations before going on any home visit. When you are going into a residence that may have bed bugs, there are certain tools you will need to prevent carrying the insects and their eggs to other locations:

- **Protective booties and coveralls;**
- **A spray bottle containing a 70 percent solution of isopropyl alcohol;**
- **Disposable, sealable, plastic bags for transporting clothing and equipment that has become contaminated;**
- **A change of clothes and shoes in a sealed bag, and**
- **A plastic stool.**

Check with your employer to see if some of these items can be provided for you. Wear protective shoe covers (booties) before entering an infested residence, and wear disposable, protective coveralls if you will be moving items in the residence that may contain bed bugs. Take only those items that are necessary for your visit into the home and do not sit on or place any items on sofas, upholstered chairs, beds or carpets. Use the plastic stool if your duties include sitting down to assist the consumer.

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Once you leave the residence, remove protective shoe covers and coveralls. If in a multi-unit building, DO NOT leave the shoe covers on as you walk through the building. Turn the items inside out as they are removed to trap any bugs inside. Place them in a tightly sealed plastic bag and immediately put the bag in an outside trash container.

Carefully inspect your clothing and shoes before you get into your car or other vehicle. Pay close attention to the insides and outsides of your shoes, lace holes, socks, pant legs, leg area and around hands and arms. Spray isopropyl alcohol directly onto any visible bed bugs. Also, keep your car clean of clutter, vacuum it weekly and monitor for signs of infestation.

What to Do if You Find Bed Bugs

If you encounter bed bugs in a residence not previously known to be infested, notify the occupants that they have bed bugs and should clean to remove them. Advise the occupants to limit their visits to other places to prevent the spread. Then, notify a supervisor and go straight home.

Once home:

- **Remove all clothing** on a hard, solid floor just inside the entry door.
- **Immediately place the clothing** in a trash bag and seal it. Keep the clothing bagged until you can wash it.
- **Wash contaminated clothing** in hot, soapy water and dry in a dryer using the highest heat setting.
- **Decontaminate clothing** or other items that cannot be washed by putting them in a hot dryer for at least 15 minutes.
- **Take a shower** or bath.
- **Continue monitoring** your home and vehicle for signs of infestation.

The Ohio Department of Aging thanks the Central Ohio Bed Bug Task Force for contributing to this fact sheet.