

## PROGRAM POLICY

### Bed Bug Prevention and Treatment Policy

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#### Preamble

CMHA York & South Simcoe is committed to the well-being of its staff and clients, and aims to eliminate the occurrence or recurrence of bed bugs.

CMHA uses an Integrated Pest Management approach to preventing and treating bed bugs which involves:

- **Education** of staff, clients and others
- Applying **prevention** strategies.
- Monitoring for **early detection**.
- **Ongoing vigilance** and cooperation of staff and clients.
- Using **pesticides** sparingly to protect the health of clients, staff, and others.

Staffs are expected to be familiar with the protocols of this manual.

#### 1.0 Documentation of Bed Bug Occurrences

All bed bug occurrences are to be documented in an Incident Report.

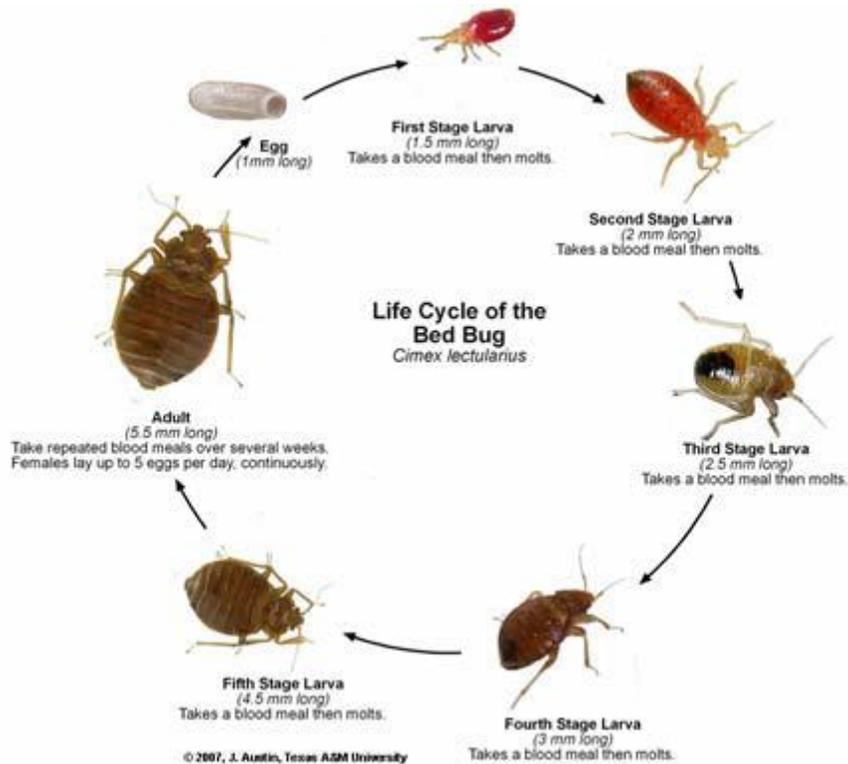
#### 2.0 About Bed Bugs

Bed bugs have not been associated with causing any diseases, but their bites can cause allergic reactions and scratching of the affected areas can lead to an infection.

Bed bugs are carried from place to place in bedding, clothing, furnishings, etc. They can travel from one apartment to another through wiring, pipes, and other openings. They are found in seams, tufts, cracks of furnishings, clothing, curtains, and baseboards and under rugs and carpets. They have been found in private and public housing, hotels, hospitals, shelters and other places. Bed bugs are about ¼ inch in length, with oval shaped bodies. Bed bugs feed on the blood of humans and other animals. Prior to feeding they are flat, and after feeding they are bloated and dark red. They hide during the day and come out at night, when they bite. They bite anywhere on the body.

Their eggs are whitish and pear-shaped and about the size of a pinhead. Clusters of 10-50 eggs are laid in cracks and crevices: the eggs hatch in about 10 days. Look for:

- Live bed bugs, eggs, and egg shells on bedding and mattresses.
- Small blood spots on sheets.
- Clusters of small itchy spots on human skin.
- Possibly a sweet, musty odour in the room.



\*Not to scale

### 3.0 Psychological Impact of Bed Bugs

People are known to experience significant psychological impact from bed bug infestations. In fact, it is very traumatizing to live with bed bugs as they cause persistent sleep disturbance, and people are left exhausted, feeling depressed, anxious, and even paranoid. Even when the infestation has been eradicated and there are no further signs of bed bug activity, people will continue to experience distress. They worry if the bugs are really gone. They may have nightmares that they are back. Relationships and intimacy with significant others can suffer.

There is real stigma with having bed bugs, particularly for those that live in rental accommodation. Tenants often feel very resistant to reporting infestations to their landlords due to fear of blame and subsequent threat of eviction. This can negatively impact relationships with other tenants who may not demonstrate understanding towards the client's predicament.

Social isolation is a reality – those with infestations feel shame and will not want to have guests over to their homes and may not want to visit others. If friends and family know about the infestation, it is likely that invitations for get-togethers will stop. This can go on for many months and leave people feeling isolated.

It is imperative that staff remain as neutral as possible with clients that have infestations. Being sensitive means being able to openly discuss the problem with clients.

## **4.0 Educating Clients**

We will share information with clients on the nature of the problem, the severity of an infestation, the need to treat it proactively, and the preventative steps that can be taken to avoid getting bed bugs in one's apartment. It is important that clients know that bed bugs are not related to lack of cleanliness or any personal issue of the client, that bedbugs are found in a variety of settings, and are more likely to occur in places where people live in close proximity. Bed bugs can affect anyone, anywhere.

## **5.0 Universal Precautions for Staff**

### **When meeting with any client in his/her home:**

- Avoid coming in close contact with fabric furniture.
- Sit on a plastic chair if possible (bed bugs do not like shiny, smooth surfaces)
- Check your surroundings for signs of bed bugs.
- Look for signs of scratching by the client.
- Hang your bag and coat on a doorknob, so they don't touch the floor, or leave belongings in your car.
- Never put any items on the floor, bed or other place.
- Ensure that pant legs are not dragging on the ground
- If you have any concerns, when you get home wash all your clothes in hot water and put in a dryer at the high setting for at least 20 minutes. Or store in a freezer in a plastic bag for at least 24 hours.

### **When the office is in a residential building (e.g., Tony Wong Place)**

- Have plastic or shiny furnishings in the office
- Have a coat rack that keeps garments and bags off the floor and away from the wall.
- Check your surroundings for signs of bed bugs.

### **Client meeting rooms at CMHA offices and CMHA sites**

- All chairs in waiting and client interview areas are leather or vinyl
- Where possible, a designated room is available at each site for meetings with clients who *may* have had contact with bedbugs.
- The room is sparsely furnished. No paper or other materials are kept in the room.

### **Use of staff cars**

- Staff do not transport clients who are known or is reasonably suspected to have bed bugs.

## **6.0 Advice given to clients to maintain a bug free home**

- Do a weekly clean-up of their residence, which includes vacuuming and dusting, laundering of bed sheets (washed and dried at high temperatures).
- To regularly look for any signs of bed bugs, especially in the bed area, seams of fabric furnishings, and baseboards.
- Practice regular disposal of garbage.
- Encourage clients to purchase bed bug covers for the mattress and pillows.
- Keep bedding off the floor, and to keep the bed away from the wall and other furnishings. Placing the legs of the bed in small cans (e.g. soup cans) or wiping a thin layer of Vaseline on the legs prevents bed bugs from getting onto the bed.

## **7.0 When Bed Bug are Suspected/Identified**

The immediate supervisor is notified as soon as potential bed bugs are detected. Updates are provided to team members and other staff. Staff should not be undertaking any pest control measures prior to consultation with their supervisor.

## **8.0 Treatment**

### **Preparing for the pest control company**

Staff should also check with the pest control company regarding other requirements.

- Remove pets from the unit and wash items such as pet blankets. If fish cannot be removed, turn off the tank and cover the tank with a moist cloth. Proper pet care is necessary.
- Remove all garbage and clutter, including pet litter.
- Make sure all drawers and closets are emptied.
- Make sure all floor and counter surfaces are clear.
- Food should be placed in the refrigerator or in sealed containers or bags, labeled Food.
- Dishes, cutlery and kitchenware; and bathroom items are placed in sealed bags and labeled as such.

Vacuum in, under and around the following with special attention to seams, cracks, and crevices:

- Bed – mattress (especially seams), box spring, frame, headboard.
- All the furniture and the radiators.

- Closets, cupboards, drawers, baseboards; carpet edges
- Any wall hangings, pictures, mirrors.
- Non-washable, non-removable window coverings and curtain rods.
- Stove, refrigerator, TV, remote control, clocks, radio and other electronic items.

When the vacuuming is completed the removable vacuum bag is immediately placed in a double black bag, sealed, labeled Bed Bugs, and placed outside in the designated area.

- Check books and magazines for any signs of bed bugs.
- If possible, steam clean, wet vacuum or shampoo any carpeting and furnishings.
- Pull all furniture at least 2 feet away from the walls. Lean the mattress and box spring up against the wall. Remove drawers from furnishings.

### **After the treatment**

- The unit is left vacant for 6 hours after treatment (that includes not letting pets back in).
- People who are pregnant or have lung problems, and children under the age of 1 year must stay out of the area for at least 24 hours.
- Windows are left open for 15-20 minutes to air the unit out and get rid of odours.
- No chemicals or cleaning products are used on any treated area for 2 weeks.
- The treatment takes 3 – 5 days to be effective.
- The unit should be vacuumed daily for 2 weeks and at least weekly after that; except around the wall perimeters which should be left for 3 weeks.

The authorized pest control company conducts a follow-up service which consists of an inspection, spot treatment and if necessary another full treatment. The follow-up service will also consist of a baseboard perimeter treatment throughout the unit. The client will need to prepare the unit again if a re-treatment is required.

### **Washable items**

- To avoid confusion, all infested/at risk items are always placed in double-bagged black bags which are securely sealed and clearly labeled. Cleaned items are always placed in green plastic bags and similarly labeled.
- All clothing, bedding, towels, and other fabric items (e.g. washable rugs and curtains, cloth bags) are double bagged in black bags to take to the laundry area. These are washed

in hot water and then placed in a dryer at high heat for at least 20 minutes. Clients may need to be provided with other clothing in order to wash what they were wearing.

## **Non-washable items**

- If pillows cannot be washed, they should be placed in a dryer on high for 30 minutes.
- Non-washable items are double bagged in black bags and sprayed with an insecticide spray and then several moth balls are added to the bag. The bag is securely sealed and labeled “Bedbug Treatment.” The bags are then stored in a designated area for 3-5 days (or as recommended by the insecticide manufacturer.) These items are aired well before use.
- Any items to be discarded are placed in double black bags, sealed, labeled *Bed Bugs*, and immediately disposed of. Large items such as furniture are broken up before being placed outside for garbage pick-up to prevent someone else taking it.

## **9.0 Financial Support for Clients**

- On a case-by-case basis CMHA will decide to what extent it can cover the cost of a pest control company.
- The Program Manager will discuss financial support possibility with the Director of Finance.
- If CMHA is covering part/whole cost a company selected by CMHA will be used.
- For CMHA to consider financing the cost of treatment, the client must be willing to take all required steps to ensure a successful treatment.

## **10.0 Bed Bugs in the staff home**

Staff members who experience bed bugs infestation in the home environment are encouraged to seek professional pest control treatment for the situation and discuss it with their manager.

### **Bed Bugs in the home but not linked to the work environment.**

Where a staff reported a home infestation of bed bugs, time-off accommodations (sick time, family care time) and support will be provided on a case-by-case basis.

### **Bed Bugs in the home that links to the work environment**

Where it can be established that the infestation of bed bugs was a direct result of the employee’s work, reimbursement of expenses for pesticides application will be reviewed on a case by case basis. Including the full cost of cleaning employee vehicles required for work.