It is becoming increasingly commonplace to find bed bugs in both public and private workplaces. The reason for this is because bed bugs are small, easily transported, and they like to hide. Anyone could carry them into your building on their clothing, personal belongings and shoes. There is no need to panic if you find bed bugs in your workplace. When properly handled, bed bugs can be eliminated with a minimum of disruption to your operations. While there is no sure fire way to prevent the risk of bed bugs, you can help decrease your chance of coming into contact with bed bugs by following these guidelines.

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A Determine workers risk of workplace exposure level 1, 2, or 3
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PREVENT – IDENTIFY – ACT

**Prevent** – This includes regular inspections of the work areas, looking for any signs of bed bugs (fecal matter – small black spots), cleaning up clutter to prevent the number of hiding places, vacuuming on a regular basis and sealing up any cracks/crevices where bugs can hide.

**Identify** – Ensure the pest is actually a bed bug. An untrained person can easily misidentify cockroach nymphs or pantry pests as bed bug nymphs. Confirm that what you find is a bed bug by consulting with an entomologist or a pest management company.

**Act** – If a bed bug(s) has been found, start the Integrated Pest Management (IPM) process which includes: supervisor to contact facilities to have area treated, notify staff of treatment, clean up clutter, vacuum areas, staff conduct self-inspections of their clothes, work area. Then continue regular monitoring of area.

**A. Determine Workers Risk of Workplace Exposure - Level 1, 2, & 3**

Bed bugs can be unknowingly brought into the workplace by employees, visitors, customers, vendors, clients and others. People who work in or visit locations with bed bug infestations, especially workers who handle bedding, clothing, or furniture where bed bugs could be hiding, are at higher risk for exposure. These occupations include fire fighters, health care professionals, housing management staff, housekeeping and custodial staff, police, and social workers who work in or visit hospitals, long-term care facilities, shelters.

**All Supervisors:**

1. Determine the level of risk of exposure in your work environment and the tasks that employees perform – Table 1, then;

2. Implement the recommended sections into your work place – Table 2

**TABLE - 1**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Level 1 – Risk of Exposure:</th>
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<tr>
<td>• Duties performed require employees to work in environments where there are known or reported bed bug infestations.</td>
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<th>Level 2 – Risk of Exposure</th>
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<tr>
<td>• Duties performed in environments where bed bug exposure is possible.</td>
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<th>Level 3 – Risk of Exposure</th>
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<tr>
<td>• Duties place employees at a similar level of exposure risk as that of the general public.</td>
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TABLE - 2

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Risk Level</th>
<th>Implement the following Sections:</th>
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<tr>
<td>Level 1</td>
<td>Sections – B, C, D, E, H, I, J, K</td>
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<td>Level 2</td>
<td>Sections – B, C, C, E, I, J, K</td>
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<tr>
<td>Level 3</td>
<td>Sections – C, D, I, K. Note: If a bed bug is found implement section - B</td>
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B. Integrated Pest Management (IPM) Program

The IPM model is a pest management program that focuses on making informed, strategic, and proactive decisions to eliminate or control the pest in a building, office or complex. This approach emphasizes monitoring and prevention coupled with non-chemical treatments and utilizes pesticides only as a last resort when other options have failed.

All Supervisors:

1. **Educate everyone and raise awareness** of bed bug habits including where bed bugs can hide, the need to reduce clutter and proper disposal of untreatable items with an emphasis on prevention. All employees should be trained and educated on bed bugs – responsibilities and precautions.

2. **Identify** the pest correctly if one has been found. Know what a bed bug looks like.

3. **Inspect regularly** all working areas for potential or suspected infestations

4. **Keep records**, including when and where pests are found.

5. **Maintain** Bed bug information records that indicate:
   - Date of finding
   - Type of complaint including bites, bug sightings and damage to property.
   - Location or room in workplace where bed bug was found.
   - Date of when pest control company came on site and if treatment was done
   - Results of the inspection, what was found
   - What pest management strategies that were used in the treatment
   - Communicate and follow-up with employees to share information and inform on proper procedures to prevent an occurrence.
6. **Prepare area** for treatment – de-clutter, move items off the floor, clear counter space, etc.

7. **Communicate** to staff if a bed bug has been found, what precautions they are to take, when treatment will happen

8. **Implement the treatment** – Facilities to contact pest control company to conduct treatment

9. **Evaluate** the IPM program and following up with inspections and additional management procedures if necessary, and gather feedback from employees.

**C. Responsibilities and Precautions**

**All Employees:**

- Read through the Bed Bug Policy and this guide prior to starting work
- Know what bed bugs look like and their habits. If there are reports of bed bugs in your area, tell your supervisor immediately.
- Always Conduct a “self-inspection” and always inspect your clothing before entering and leaving the office building
  - Shake things out!
  - Check inside of pockets, sleeves, folds of clothing pay special attention to inside or outside of shoes, lace holes, socks, pants legs, leg area and around hands and arms
  - Brush things off!
  - Wipe things down! – use Lysol wipes or other antibacterial or alcohol based wipes to clean off shoes, bags and other surfaces.
  - Use the “buddy system” when available to help check areas like the back that are not easy to see.
- Hang your coat or bag on a coat hook or door handle, keep all personal items off the floor.
- Keep items such as; coat, purse, shoes and other personal belongings in plastic containers, and garment bags
- Encasing bags/briefcases brought to work in bed bug proof luggage liners decreases the bed bugs’ ability to get into the work place. Use hard sided briefcases, as opposed to soft suitcases or bags.
- Metal and plastic surfaces are better than wood when it comes to furniture etc. Bed bugs have a much harder time burrowing in whereas with wood it makes a much better hiding area. Metal surfaces are easy wipe and clean removing eggs and feces.
- Always reduce clutter and unnecessary paper pile up to reduce bed bug hiding places.
- Inspect clothing, crevices, furniture, carpets, chairs, and wall hangings for bed bugs regularly.

**What to do after leaving a potentially Bed Bug infested location**

- Always Conduct a “self-inspection”
  - Shake things out!
• Check inside of pockets, sleeves, folds of clothing pay special attention to inside or outside of shoes, lace holes, socks, pants legs, leg area and around hands and arms
• Brush things off!
• Wipe things down! – use Lysol wipes or other antibacterial or alcohol based wipes to clean off shoes, bags and other surfaces.
• Use the “buddy system” when available to help check areas like the back that are not easy to see.
  o Keep a change of clothing at work in a sealed clear bag or tote container if you believe you have been exposed to bed bugs.
  o If there are any concerns that you picked up a bed bug, remove clothing (on hard-floored surface) and seal in plastic bag.
    • Wash clothes at the hottest recommended setting. Tumble dry clothes on high heat for 30 – 45 minutes. Clothes that require dry cleaning should be kept in a sealed plastic bag until dry cleaning.
  o If you find a bed bug on you, collect it, do not kill it, confirmation is key

When a Bed Bug is found at a worksite
  o If you see a bed bug, collect it and do not kill it as confirmation is key.
  o Notify your supervisor immediately
  o Always Conduct a “self-inspection”
    • Shake things out!
    • Check inside of pockets, sleeves, folds of clothing pay special attention to inside or outside of shoes, lace holes, socks, pants legs, leg area and around hands and arms
    • Brush things off!
    • Wipe things down! – use Lysol wipes or other antibacterial or alcohol based wipes to clean off shoes, bags and other surfaces.
    • Use the “buddy system” when available to help check areas like the back that are not easy to see.
  o Remove clothes before or immediately upon entering your home, preferably on a hard floor surface. Put them in a separate sealed bag and keep them away from other laundry.
  o If there are any concerns that you picked up a bed bug, remove clothing (on hard-floored surface) and seal in plastic bag.
  o Wash clothes at the hottest recommended setting. Tumble dry clothes on high heat for 30 – 45 minutes. Clothes that require dry cleaning should be kept in a sealed plastic bag until dry cleaning.

D. Actions Supervisors can take to prevent Bed Bugs at work
  o Provide information/training to employees who are at risk of bed bug exposure based on the level identified
  o Put into place and communicate a means for reporting bed bug exposures
o Arrange regular inspections of fixed workplaces where bed bugs may be encountered. Should bed bugs be present, work with facilities management to identify appropriate remedial measures and undertake these measures
o Share with employees the Q&A document regarding bed bugs (Appendix A) that is appended to this guide
o Provide protective measures and devices appropriate to the nature of work performed
o Communicate with the employee(s) who expressed the concern regarding bed bugs, how to identify them, where they are typically located, how to avoid picking them up and taking them home
o In the event that the concern is generalized throughout the workplace, arrange for information sessions for employees
o Contact your Occupational Health, Safety and Wellness Specialist and Hamilton Public Health (HPH) assistance, as needed
o Continued education for all new and existing employees on how to prevent bed bugs and other pests in the workplace using this guide and the resources.
- Bed Bug proof areas by removing clutter and minimize the storage of unnecessary items.
- Designate specific areas for storage and post signage to ensure improper storage does not occur.
- Provide employees with appropriate personal protective equipment (PPE) such as coveralls, shoe covers, or gloves where appropriate
- Strongly encourage and foster a safe non-judgmental environment where employees can report bed bug sightings and unexplained bites or red marks without fear of reprisal. Invite suggestions and feedback from employees.
- Have employees store personal items off the floor and in enclosed containers/bags, for example: store items in plastic bin with sealable lid, plastic bags with re-sealable closure, garment bags.
- Strategically place monitoring devices (sticky tapes, traps or climbing deterrents) in areas of concern. Traps should be placed along the edges of the base of cubicle dividers, in areas where personal belongings are stored, next to computers and other heat generating equipment, and in areas where utilities emerge from raised floors. Climbing deterrents, including moats or two sided tape, should be placed on or beneath furniture legs.
- Office furniture, metal, plastic and vinyl surfaces are less appealing to bed bugs and are generally better and easier to clean than upholstered furniture.

E. Respond To Bed Bug Findings:

- Don’t kill them or crush them! It is impossible to make a positive identification from smashed bug parts!
- Put the live bug(s) in a pill bottle or a tightly sealed plastic bag so that your pest management professional (PMP) can make a positive identification.
- Try to isolate the area where the bug(s) were found.

Act Quickly

- Supervisor to contact Facilities immediately.
When the pest control company is on site, they should verify that you have bed bugs, and they should provide you with a treatment plan that explains the chemicals they will use, how they will apply them, if traps will be set, and when follow up inspections and treatments will be scheduled.

- Treatment should not occur while people are in the area. Treatment should be done at the end of the day.
- Notify staff of the pending treatment and have them remove items off the floor and to do a self-inspection before leaving.

**Protect Yourself and Your Employees**

- Staff and clients should not be in the area where the bug(s) were found, if possible.
- Coats, purses and other personal belongings should be placed in a tightly sealed plastic bag, or a plastic container with a tight fitting lid.
- Keeping a pair of shoes for use in the work place until the bed bugs are gone helps to prevent infestations in employees’ homes and cars
- Reduce clutter if at all possible.
- Advise staff to check their shoes and other clothing when they at the end of the day – self-inspection
- In high risk work places, consider installing a dryer on the premises for the employees to use.

**Communicate with Your Staff and Clients**

- There are many things that you can do to reassure the people in your office.
- Recognize that silence is your worst enemy because it leads to speculation, and speculation leads to distrust and panic.
- Assure everyone that the bed bugs will be collected by a licensed pest management professional.
- Define the area of the office that will be treated. Most people will assume that the entire building will be treated, but that is highly unlikely.
- Explain to your staff that the chemicals that will be used are approved and that they are considered safe when they are applied according to the label.
- Avoid using the terms “infestation” or “infested.” A few bed bugs in one or two locations in your office is not an infestation, it is an occurrence.
- Have copies of the material safety data sheets for the chemicals that will be used to collect the bed bugs available for you staff by obtaining them from the pest control company.

**Debunk the Misconceptions**

- When one or two bed bugs, are found, most people assume that there are many more in the building, which isn’t always the case.
- Assure employees that bed bugs do not transmit disease.
- Bed bugs are a pest, but they shouldn’t be a cause for panic. There is no need to suspend your operations, especially if the bed bugs were only found in a few isolated places.

F. What about an employee who has Bed Bugs at home
Discreetly speak with your employee
Inquire if they are currently undergoing treatment
Ask them to bring a change of clothing with them that had been dried and sealed in a plastic bag just before leaving home. Provide a place for them to change. A space without carpeting or upholstered furniture is preferred.
Have them place the clothing, coat, and shoes that they wore to work in a tightly sealed plastic bag or plastic container.
Encourage the employee to keep a pair of shoes in the workplace that they only wear at work.
The employee should be encouraged to bring as little as possible with them from home
If the person lives in rental housing, and the landlord refuses to treat their unit or building, refer them to bedbuginfo.ca and to the landlord tenant Act.
Dealing with an employee who has bed bugs requires sensitivity. People feel ashamed that they have the bugs, and they are reluctant to talk about their problem with anyone.
Blaming or accusing the employee won’t solve the problem. Getting bed bugs is no one’s fault
Provide the employee with resources such as bedbuginfo.ca

G. Clients and the workplace

It is not always known if a client entering the workplace has been exposed to bed bugs. Some clients verbally make known their situation to their case manager that they have/had bed bugs in their home and it is/has been treated, others may not communicate this. In rare instances, a client may enter the workplace with visible signs of having bed bugs or bed bug activity.

If a client has entered the workplace and has visible signs of bed bug activity, the following procedures should be followed:

Ask the client to remain where they are.
Report the situation immediately to your supervisor.
If you have the facilities to allow this:
  • The supervisor will direct the client to an area that has been identified for situations such as this and communicate their findings and work with the client to get the help that they need to rectify the problem.
The supervisor will ensure that the area/room is closed or monitored to prevent other persons from entering that area/room.
The supervisor will contact facilities to inform them of the situation and that the designated area that was exposed is required to be treated.

H. Precautions when going into a potentially or known infested area

All Employees:

Take only necessary items into the area
o Avoid sitting on sofas, upholstered chairs, or beds. Try to sit on a plastic or metal chair if you must sit down
o Avoid leaning up against the walls, doors, stoves, or sit on any cloth furniture. Wooden furniture is acceptable, but you still want to be careful!
o Stand in the middle of the living room, kitchen or where ever you are comfortable
o Avoid placing any items on upholstered furniture, bedding, and carpet floors.
o Keep your personal items such as purses, coats, or bag in your vehicle, this action will help to decrease the risk of transporting the pests to our home.
o If you must wear your coat, it is recommended that you leave it in your vehicle or you can take it off but carry it with you as opposed to taking it off and draping it over the furniture, doors, etc.
o Avoid wearing multiple layers, slacks/pants with cuffs, long skirts or other apparel that will drag on the ground.
o If your visit is going to be extended, bring a change of clothes.
  • Minimize the items you take into a potentially infested environment - take only what you need.
  • Protect all belongings that you take into an infested environment by putting them into sealable plastic containers or bags and placing them in the middle of the room.
  • Consider changing into work clothes and shoes when you get to work and removing them before you go home (when there is a risk of infestation). Keep your clothing items in sealed plastic containers or sealed plastic bags to avoid bed bug contact.
  • Place your clothes in a clear plastic bag and wash in hot water (full laundry cycle) immediately when you get home. Place in dryer 30-45 minutes
o Always Conduct a “self-inspection”
  • Shake things out!
  • Check inside of pockets, sleeves, folds of clothing pay special attention to inside or outside of shoes, lace holes, socks, pants legs, leg area and around hands and arms
  • Brush things off!
  • Wipe things down! – use Lysol wipes or other antibacterial or alcohol based wipes to clean off shoes, bags and other surfaces.
  • Use the “buddy system” when available to help check areas like the back that are not easy to see.
o Report all bed bug sightings to your supervisor

I. How to prevent picking up Bed Bugs

All Employees:

Bed bugs have to hitch a ride to travel, therefore take these precautions while at the worksite to reduce the risk of picking up bed bugs:
o Always Conduct a “self-inspection”
  • Shake things out!
  • Check inside of pockets, sleeves, folds of clothing pay special attention to inside or outside of shoes, lace holes, socks, pants legs, leg area and around hands and arms
• Brush things off!
• Wipe things down! – use Lysol wipes or other antibacterial or alcohol based wipes to clean off shoes, bags and other surfaces.
• Use the “buddy system” when available to help check areas like the back that are not easy to see.
  o Hang personal items such as bags, briefcases and coats from a door knob or hook to keep them off of the floor.
  o Inspect your shoe treads, clothing, cuffs, pockets collar and belongings after leaving your worksite or office for small black (fecal matter) or dark red (blood) stains, along with both live and dead bed bugs. Use lysol wipes to wipe down shoes/boots.
  o Report all bed bug sightings to your supervisor

J. Treatment

o Supervisor to notify Facilities if a bed bug is found or signs of a bed bug. A pest control company will be contacted (by Facilities) to come on site and conduct an inspection and recommend a treatment plan.
  o Treating the recommended area(s) should be done when employees are not in the office (end of the day).
  o Material Safety Data Sheets (MSDS) should be provided to the Joint Health and Safety Committee before treatment commences.
  o Depending on the situation, there may be up to 2-4 treatments required. The pest control company will make the recommendation on the treatment intervals and methods to be used.
  o The supervisor should post on the health and safety board the treatment history and the results of the follow-up treatments.
  o Treatment of office area may differ than residential.

  • Insecticides alone can rarely eliminate a bed bug infestation. Long-term control requires that non-chemical methods (de-cluttering, visual inspections, etc.) be used in combination with insecticides as part of an integrated bed bug management program.
  • The insecticides available are commercial products requiring special equipment and training and should only be used by licensed operators.
  • The insecticides available in over-the-counter products are not effective in controlling bed bugs and are not recommended.

Post Treatment

  • Once all treatments are completed, and no one has seen any new bed bug activity or evidence, the area can be considered “controlled,” and employees will be asked to remain vigilant in identifying bed bugs as well as implementing all the precautions on a regular basis
  • Be aware that no one can guarantee the occurrence is completely gone or that new bed bugs will not be introduced into the facility.

K. About Bed Bugs
Basic Facts about Bed Bugs

- Bed bugs don’t fly (they don’t have wings!)
- Bed bugs cannot jump.
- Bed bugs crawl fast.
- Bed bugs are nocturnal insects, except in buildings where the carbon dioxide levels are at their highest during the day.
- Bed bugs like to hide.
- Bed bugs feed on human and animal blood.
- Mature bed bugs can survive for at least a year without a blood meal.
- Bed bugs are attracted to us by the heat and carbon dioxide that we produce.
- Bed bugs are not known to transmit disease.

Identify Them

- Even bed bug eggs and juveniles are visible. (A flashlight and magnifying glass make it easier to see them.)
- Bed bugs are reddish brown and shaped like an apple seed
- Bed bugs bites cause itchy welts in about 70% of the people who’ve been bitten. The welts typically occur in groups on exposed skin, but they look like other insect and spider bites. They can cause scars.
Bed Bug Bites:

- Bedbugs have never been shown to transmit disease to humans.
- Bed bug bites. Bite reactions look very different from one person to another. Some bed bug bites are large or small welts, some have a red dot in the centre, or a scab, others don’t, and some look like mosquito bites or pimples.
  - Often bites are in groups where one bed bug has begun to feed, been disturbed and starts feeding again. Some may be just single bites.
  - Persons who have a suppressed immune system may not show any bite reactions.
- Since bed bug bites may be mistaken for other pest bites or stings (e.g. fleas, mosquitoes, black flies, wasps, etc.) it is recommended that you consult a health professional if in doubt.
- Bedbugs do bite and feed on human blood but can survive for 18 months without feeding

What are the signs of Bed Bugs:

- Found through finding live bugs
• Bed bugs tend to gather in places where a person sleeps.
• Droppings in the form of dark coloured stains or bumps on hard surfaces usually found on bed linen but also on any other surface where they feed or hide.
• Fecal spots are the result of bed bug digestion and can be found on clothes, linen and sometimes on wood or other surfaces. They may resemble a black magic marker dot. Eggs, although very small and adhered to surfaces, will be found among droppings or in crevices where adults and nymphs hide.
• Bedbugs are usually considered to be nocturnal but may present during the day in stressed conditions.
• Blood stains, spots, streaks from crushed bugs on bed sheets
• Smelling the bugs’ characteristic odor
• Any combination of two or more of these signs can help verify an infestation

Survey the Premises
• Train your staff to know what bed bugs look like and how to identify them.
• Carefully inspect the area where the suspected bed bug was found as soon as you can.
• Because bed bugs like to hide, it is important to know where to look for them: check the folds and seams in upholstery, lockers, baseboards, cubicle walls, furniture joints and corners, electrical outlets, switches, piles of papers and other nooks and crannies.

Where to look?
• In the seams and creases of chairs
• Under chairs, couches and beds
• Between cushions and curtain folds
• Behind baseboards and around windows
• Any narrow space or crevice such as; window/door frames, cracks in wall, plaster and moldings
• Inside/under wallpaper, electrical boxes
• Behind mirrors, wall hangings
• Check the floor and moldings.
• Look inside and underneath drawers.
• In purses and clothing

L. Additional Resources
• www.bedbuginfo.ca
• www.shepellfgi.com