

Bed Bug Pre-treatment Checklist

If you have bed bugs in your home, it will take an effective Integrated Pest Management (IPM) approach to resolve the issue.

IPM is an environmentally sensitive and common sense approach to pest management. Monitoring and putting preventative measures in place to eliminate entry for pests are examples of IPM approaches.

Bed bugs are not easy to control. There are things you can do to help deal with the problem prior to any formal pest control. If you feel you have an infestation it is recommended that a professional pest control service be contacted. Remember, the better the preparation and co-operation with pest control operators, the faster the bed bugs will be controlled.

Once bed bugs are confirmed in your home or rental unit, affected areas must be prepared prior to receiving any treatment from a pest control company. This is referred to as “pre-treatment.”

- Remove all clutter from areas requiring treatment.
- All clothing items should be placed in garbage bags, sealed, and emptied directly into the washing machine. The garbage bags used for transporting clothing articles to the laundry room should be discarded outside the premise as they may contain bed bugs. (*Note: for severe infestations, water soluble bags can be used to collect sheets and clothing and put directly into the wash*).
- It is important to launder items using hot water. Cold water will not kill bed bugs or their eggs.
- All washed clothing, bedding, towels, etc. must be put through a clothes dryer for a minimum of 20 minutes on high heat. This will kill any bed bugs and eggs that are present.
- When the washing and drying cycles are complete, clean laundry should be placed in new clear garbage bags and sealed until treatment is complete.
- For items that must be dry cleaned, you can place them in garbage bags, garment bags, or clothes protectors containing moth balls or flakes and then seal the bags.
- Move all furniture in affected areas 12-18 inches away from walls. Floors and shelves of closets should also be clear. This will allow for proper vacuuming, better inspection, and treatment.
- Remove all drawers from dressers, night tables, etc. Bed bugs often “cement” their eggs to wooden surfaces. A stiff bristle brush should be used on surfaces if eggs/casings are found stuck to wood items. This will allow for proper vacuuming, better inspection, and treatment.
- Check behind pictures or on other wall items. Vacuum if necessary.
- In any room where bed bugs are found, check hard covered books, magazines, and papers to ensure no bed bugs are present and place items in garbage bags.

Remember to vacuum:

- Bed bugs and their eggs can be best captured by using the nozzle attachment on your vacuum.
- When finished vacuuming, ensure bags or reservoirs are changed/cleaned out immediately. Place in double plastic bags, tie off and dispose of directly into garbage bin outside if possible.
- Bed mattresses and box springs. Inspect your mattress and box springs paying attention to the folds, crevices, and underside. These are locations where bed bugs like to hide.
- Bed frames, inside dressers, cabinets, and drawers.
- Along baseboards, outlets, and perimeters of the room.
- Cloth covered furniture such as sofas. Pay attention to the seams and folds of cushions, surfaces where cushions sit, and underneath the piece of furniture.
- Throw and area rugs – tops and underneath.
- Carpets.
- Around and under items that cannot be easily moved such as stove and fridges.
- Electronics such as telephones, radios, clocks, and computer components all contain tiny crevices where bed bugs can hide and lay eggs.
- Windows and the curtains or blinds. Raise or tie off items such as drapes or blinds so they are not near the floor.
- Door casings and trim.

Where to find more information:

For more information, call a professional pest control service. To speak to a public health professional, call Health Connection at 705-721-7520 or 1-877-721-7520.