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## Tips for the management of bed bugs

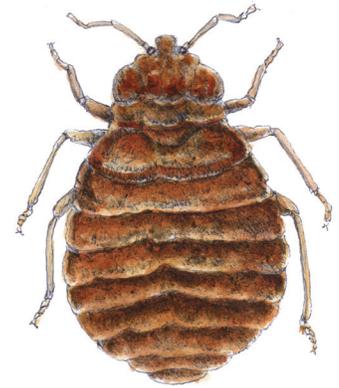
Bed bugs are a growing problem in North America, invading hotels, hospitals, educational facilities, movie theaters, retail stores and other businesses, as well as private residences. Although they have not been proven to spread disease, bed bugs inflict bites that can be itchy and unsightly, and often cause a psychological reaction in people. Bed bugs require professional pest management expertise to eliminate. However, businesses can take steps to reduce the likelihood of infestation and find issues early.

### Where you might see them

- Bed bugs are most likely to appear in sleeping areas and high-traffic areas where humans are present.
- Sleeping areas are the primary location where bed bugs will be found: hotel rooms, on-duty physician sleeping rooms, patient rooms, college dormitories, etc.
- Gathering areas – break rooms, lounges, reception areas and lobbies with soft furniture or areas where people relax – can be hot spots for bed bug activity.
- Locker rooms and employee personal belonging storage areas are especially susceptible to bed bug activity.
- Holding areas or frequently traveled routes for goods, supplies, and equipment may also be prone to bed bug activity, as the pests can hitchhike on things such as incoming goods, vacuums, carts, etc.
- Bed bugs hide in gaps, voids, cracks and crevices, such as in furniture, wall voids, and spaces in decorative items. If a credit card can fit in the gap, a bed bug can as well.

### Tips for management

- Any items coming into your facility, especially returned goods, should be inspected for bed bug activity. Institute a quarantine period for suspect items, placing them in sealed, clear plastic bags to monitor for activity.
- Seal cracks where bed bugs can hide, especially in high-risk areas.
- Restrict where employee personal belongings such as backpacks and handbags can be placed or stored to minimize introduction points.
- Enforce weekly or monthly employee locker clean outs to find activity sooner.
- Minimize clutter to reduce bed bug hiding places.
- Utilize mattress and box spring encasements to protect sleep sets from becoming infested by any pests introduced to an establishment.
- Educate employees on how to identify bed bugs or signs of activity. They are the first line of defense in spotting potential issues.



### Identification and biology

- Adult bed bugs are roughly ¼-inch long by ⅛-inch wide, are reddish-brown in color and are often compared to the size of an apple seed. Nymphs are visible but hard to see and can be as small as ⅓<sub>32</sub>-inch.
- Bed bug eggs are very hard to see with the naked eye. They are white, have a pearly sheen and are found clustered together.
- A telltale sign of bed bug activity is the presence of fecal smears, which resemble rust stains, on mattresses, box springs and bedding.
- Bed bugs are most often introduced to a facility by hitchhiking on objects – incoming supplies, personal belongings, equipment, etc. Any employee or guest with a bed bug issue at home could unknowingly bring pests into your facility.
- Bed bugs are expert crawlers and often spread by crawling to new areas.

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