



Reducing the Risk of Transporting Bed Bugs - Guidelines for Home Visits

The following guidelines have been developed to help minimize the potential for transporting bed bugs to your workplace or home. Following these guidelines will also limit the potential for transporting other pests, such as cockroaches or fleas from the premises as well.

Off-Site Preparation

- Anyone who conducts visits to a home or apartment setting should become familiar with the basics of bed bugs – what they look like, how to identify signs of an infestation, and how to protect yourself from bringing them home with you.
- Prior to making your first visit, gently discuss any known pest issues the client is facing or suspecting. Carefully ask if pests are present and if any pest control is currently underway. The key here is being subtle – some people are easily offended or may be embarrassed by the fact they are dealing with a pest infestation.
- Unless you are a pest management professional, do not accept samples of bugs from the dwelling unit.
- Non-medical visitors should not look at a client's body for bite marks or accept body tissue samples.
- Recommend clients see their medical provider for an examination of their bites or bite symptoms. **Note:** Bites from other insects such as mosquitoes, lice ticks, fleas, mites and spiders can all have a similar appearance and contact with topical or systemic allergens may cause hives or lesions that look like "bites".
- Bites cannot confirm the presence of bed bugs. Identification of an infestation may be made by seeing physical evidence such as fecal material, eggs, cast skins or bed bugs.

During the Home Visit

When going into a residence one must take on the mind-set of "extreme-precaution." With this in mind, one should rationalize the experience by assuming **beds, furniture, and other items are infested.**

- Carefully assess the dwelling upon entering – look for clutter and evidence of a pest infestation i.e. bugs crawling on floors or walls, insect feces on walls or around electric outlets and switches, brown stains or insect shells on mattresses. See Figures 1 through 4 which also show difference between cockroach and bed bugs.

- Avoid wearing pants with cuffs or shoes with laces. You may choose to put on protective shoe coverings (booties) before entering the dwelling, especially if it is a building with a known infestation.
- Try to limit the amount of items you take with you into the home or apartment.
- Never place items directly on a bed, cloth furniture, or carpeting. If items need to be put down, set on a hard surface such as kitchen counters or a table top.
- If you need to sit down during the visit, choose a wooden, plastic or metal chair, as bed bugs prefer soft upholstered furniture in which they hide.
- If any bed bugs or evidence of an infestation is observed, ask the resident if they are aware of any pest problem. If the dwelling is a rental unit, the resident should inform the building manager immediately. Early detection will assist in reducing the time and expense of treating and controlling bed bugs.
- Be aware of your surroundings and be careful of coming into contact with fabric, furniture, bedding, and walls.
- Remove your protective shoe covers (booties) after walking out of the client's entrance door. Place booties in a tightly sealed plastic bag and discard bag in an outdoor trash receptacle.
- Return to your vehicle, but prior to entering, perform a self inspection. It is important to always check for pests immediately after leaving someone's home and before entering another facility or a vehicle.
- Any items you brought with you from the dwelling should be placed in tightly sealed plastic bags prior to placing them in your vehicle if there is any chance you may have picked up any "hitchhikers".
- As additional precautions when one arrives home, remove work clothing over a non-carpeted floor and be ready to capture and destroy any bed bugs. Keep all items that are to be washed and/or dried in the sealed plastic bag until it is time to launder. Place your clothing in the dryer on high-heat for at least 20 minutes. In severely infested situations, one will want to change as soon as possible, and where appropriate, then place clothing in a bag to be laundered (one should keep a change of clothes in one's vehicle).
- Notify your supervisor in the event of finding evidence of bed bugs while performing the self inspection. It may be necessary to change into another set of clothing to minimize the potential for transporting bed bugs or eggs to your home or the office. Any clothing potentially exposed to bed bugs should be promptly placed in a tightly sealed plastic bag and then washed and dried on a hot setting.

See Figures 1 through 4 demonstrating difference between cockroach and bed bugs:



Figure 1 Cockroach frass (feces)



Figure 2 Cockroaches and frass in a doorframe



Figure 3 Bedbugs on mattress



Figure 4 Bed bug hiding place where the carpet meets the wall