



## BED BUG PREVENTION AND EARLY DETECTION



### Traveling

People traveling can be at risk for encountering bed bugs. It is always good practice to check your room for bed bugs, regardless of your type of accommodations. Bed bugs can enter the home when carried in on clothes, backpacks or luggage. Follow these tips when traveling:

- Inspect your room before you settle in. A safe place for your luggage would be the bathtub while you inspect. Look for bed bugs and their feces [dark red/brown blood stains] by peeling back the bed sheets and look between the mattress and box spring paying particular attention to the head of the bed, check the mattress seams, headboard area, under the alarm clock, lamp and telephone. Bed bugs can be found wherever a person sleeps so an inspection of sleeper couches should also be conducted.
- If you find bed bugs or their signs, call the manager immediately and request a different room.

After the room has been inspected with no sign of bed bugs:

- Avoid unpacking clothing and storing items in drawers. It is best to hang clothing or leave them in your luggage. Elevate luggage off the floor using luggage racks or in the bathtub. **Do not** leave clothing or personal items lying on the bed or furniture.
- Cover up. Bed Bugs feed on exposed skin. You may limit bites by wearing pajamas that cover as much skin as possible.
- Be aware of any unexplained reddened areas (bites) on exposed skin that you may find in the morning as this could be the result of bed bugs. Look for fecal spots on bed sheets or nearby areas. Note: bed bugs cannot be identified or confirmed by a bite.

Upon returning home from a trip:

- Immediately launder washable items in the washer at the highest heat setting and dry on the highest heat setting for at least 20 minutes. Clean clothing can be placed in the dryer at the highest heat setting for at least 20 minutes. If clothing items have specific

instructions about not washing or drying on hot temperatures, you should seal these items in a plastic bag and consult a dry cleaning company.

- Carefully inspect your luggage, paying attention to seams and crevices.
- If the inspection makes you suspect a bed bug problem, isolate your luggage and tightly wrap in plastic or tightly seal in a plastic bag and leave sealed for one year.
- Backpacks and duffle bags without wheels can be dried at the highest heat setting for at least 20 minutes.
- If you are a frequent traveler, you can purchase PackTite devices and heat treat your luggage each time you return home from travelling.



## Home Monitoring

- Learn how to identify bed bugs and bed bug waste so you can spot an infestation early and take action. Conduct quick inspections of your home on a regular basis. [See Polk County Manual for Prevention and Control of Bed Bugs, Inspection section.](#)
- Use laboratory-tested, bite-proof encasements on your mattress and box spring. If the couch is used for a sleeping area you can also purchase couch encasements.
- Use monitoring tools to assess for infestation. A monitor gets in the bug's pathway. A trap can be created by applying double-sided tape or purchasing an interceptor device. This will either trap the bugs or show their fecal matter. Monitoring is most effective in a room where people regularly sleep. If you find bed bugs or cast skins, you should contact your Pest Management Professional.



## Used Furniture and Bedding

**Do not** take bedding and furniture that has been discarded and left by the curb for disposal.

Before purchasing bedding and furniture from garage sales, flea markets, online or offline classifieds or accepting second-hand or donated furniture and bedding **inspect for bed bugs**. If purchasing from a rent-to-own or second-hand store, ask for their bed bug prevention policy. Note: Bed bugs are not limited to beds and mattresses, they can also be found on couches,

recliners and other upholstered furniture; as well as nightstands, dresser and in or on other furniture that is close to a person's sleeping area. See Polk County Manual for Prevention and Control of Bed Bugs, Inspection section.



## DISPOSAL OF BED BUG INFESTED ITEMS

Sometimes when people get rid of bed bug infested goods, unsuspecting people pick them up and bring them into their homes. If you are instructed by a pest management professional or choose to dispose of bed bug infested furnishings or bedding you should:

- Deface the furnishing by labeling in bold clear lettering this “item is not for reuse”.
- Slash mattresses and plush furniture; saw through the wood frame of box springs and damage dressers.



**Polk County Health Department  
Polk County Bed Bug Task Force**