

Bedbug Management Protocols for Health Care Workers

At The Workplace

When you work in a client's home you may come into contact with bed bugs. One of your worries may be how to do your best for your client and at the same time protect your home from the bed bugs.

What to Do at a Client's Home

Clothing to Wear at Work

- Wear clothing that can be washed then dried in a hot dryer. This includes your winter coat and other outerwear (like mittens).
- Light coloured clothing makes it easier to see bed bugs. Choose pants without cuffs and shoes that are smooth with no trim that bed bugs can hide underneath.
- Hang your coat or jacket on a wire hanger and hang it from a shower curtain rod. Make sure it doesn't touch anything else.

Equipment

- Be careful where you sit. The safest choice is a hard kitchen chair. Try not to sit on sofas and beds.
- Take in the least amount of stuff possible. Things like bags, tool kits, and coats are good hiding places for bed bugs.
 - Use smooth bags, without a lot of decorations on them or use metal or smooth plastic tool boxes and containers for your equipment.
 - Put a barrier under your bag or other equipment to isolate it from the room. A white plastic bag works well as a barrier. Bed bugs are not likely to crawl on it because it's smooth. Using a plastic bag that is white makes bed bugs easier to see. Leave whatever you use as a barrier under your bag for the client to throw out.

Going Home after Work

- When you work in places that have, or may have bed bugs your biggest fear is bringing them home with you. Having a routine that will kill a bed bug that manages to hide on your equipment or clothing is a good way to stop this happening.
- Take off the clothes you were wearing in the bed bug infested building as soon as possible and before moving around in your home. A great place is a garage if you have one.
- If you don't have a garage, take off any clothing that may be infested with bed bugs as close to the entrance door as possible. If you live in an apartment, the bathtub might be

the best place. This is because bed bugs are easy to see on light surfaces and don't like crawling on smooth slippery surfaces.

- Put all your clothing in a plastic bag.
- Seal the bag and take it directly to the washing machine.
- If your clothes are still clean, put the clothes in a dryer on the hottest setting for 30 minutes. It is the heat of the hot dryer that kills the bed bugs.
- Don't take clothes off in your bedroom—you might as well carry the bed bug over to your bed.

Working with Clients Living with a Bed Bug Infestation

If you can see bed bugs moving around a well-lit room, there is likely a heavy infestation. You should leave if you can. It may be a good idea for anyone living there to leave if they can.

If your client lives in rental housing, suggest that they tell the landlord they have bed bugs. If the landlord doesn't do anything about it, you can suggest that your client call the Environmental Public Health office in their area. You can also report the infestation to Environmental Public Health if you find the landlord doesn't do anything about the infestation. You will have to give the name of your client but their name is not shared with the landlord.

If your client lives in a home he or she (or their family) own they should call a pest control company for help to treat the bed bug infestation.

If you work in different homes during the day, be very careful not to transfer the bed bugs from one place to the other. If you know a place has bed bugs, visit it last. You can also wear a protective coverall so the bed bugs can't crawl under a seam or in a pant cuff.

If you find yourself working in a building that is heavily infested, you should change your clothes if you can before going to the next place.

Remember: Bed bugs need people to move them from place to place. They also depend on the large numbers of offspring one female makes to survive and spread. Knowing a little bit and using a few simple precautions may prevent an infestation.