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How to Inspect for Bed Bugs

According to pest management professionals (PMP), the number of bed bug-related service calls has increased by more than 400% in the past five years. Bed bug infestations are occurring in hotels, apartments, nursing homes, upscale commercial office buildings, school classrooms, dormitories, and the list goes on. The basic bed bug damage claim encompasses property damage as well as pain and suffering (physical and emotional). In addition, most property owners are concerned about the potential negative impact to their reputation. After all, who would want to rent a room or reside in an apartment/nursing home after hearing it had a bed bug infestation?

Tools and Equipment

Bed bugs are small, and identifying their presence requires some basic tools and equipment. Recommended equipment includes: a magnifying glass, a flashlight, and plastic zippered bags for collecting specimens; a probe, such as a credit card cut into a long triangle for checking narrow spaces; compressed air for flushing bed bugs from cracks and crevices; a screwdriver to remove light switch cover plates; and alcohol, glass-cleaner, or baby wipes to confirm that stains are bed bug droppings.

The inspection process should be thorough and, initially, focused on the bedroom.

The intent is to look for signs of bed bugs,

check for their hiding places, and ultimately confirm the presence of the insect. This checklist is designed to be used as a tool for bed bug inspection.

Next Steps

The solution to a bed bug problem requires a series of steps that begins with confirming the presence of the insect. If the presence or evidence of bed bugs is found, contact a PMP to do a thorough survey. Several cycles of inspection, cleaning, and treatment may be required before bed bugs are eliminated.

Identification

	YES	NO	NA
Is there evidence of bugs or brown spots (dried blood) around the seams and tufts of a mattress?			
Are bed bugs or brown staining visible between the folds of draperies or curtains?			
Are there signs of infestation underneath chairs, couches, beds, and dustcovers?			
Is the bed frame checked thoroughly, even in the cracks and screw housings?			
Do gaps behind baseboards, pictures, window and door casings, wallpaper, and other 'shelters' harbor bed bugs?			

Identification (continued)

	YES	NO	NA
Do nightstands, dressers, etc. show evidence of bed bugs?			
Do doors and window casings show evidence of bed bug infestation?			
Has the area behind the electrical switch plate been checked for infestation?			
Were telephones, radios, clocks, and similar places checked for the presence of bed bugs?			

Recordkeeping

	YES	NO	NA
Have there been complaints about bed bug bites?			
If so, were the complaints documented, including the investigation activities taken by management?			
Were inspections completed in adjacent units, including the unit above and below the unit where the complaint about bed bugs was received?			
Are treatment records kept, including dates and locations of various housekeeping and pest control activities?			
Are records of actions taken to resolve the problem maintained and inclusive of findings after treatments?			

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The Hanover Insurance Company
440 Lincoln Street, Worcester, MA 01653

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