

## **Guidelines for Reducing the Risk of Transporting Bed Bugs for Employees Who Conduct Home Visits**

All employees who visit clients in their homes or apartment units are strongly encouraged to abide by the following guidelines. While these guidelines specifically mention bed bugs or a specific type of infestation, they also apply to other types of insects or pests.

### **1. Recommended for all employees who conduct home visits.**

All employees should attend bed bug training. Training should include: identification of bed bugs; awareness of where bed bugs can hide; how to conduct a self-inspection; containment and isolation procedures; and, procedures for controlling bed bugs should a problem exist.

### **2. Recommended guidelines for Bed Bug Containment Kit.**

Employees visiting residences that may have a bed bug infestation should maintain a bed bug containment and isolation kit. The following items are recommended;

- A plastic tote box
- Protective booties and disposable coveralls (Tyvek, or equivalent)
- A roll of Duct Tape (white or light colored)
- A roll of clear plastic drum liners (garbage bags for 50 gal. drums)
- A few plastic grocery bags for storage of smaller miscellaneous items
- Flashlight
- Narrow bladed spatula (such as a  $\frac{3}{4}$ " – 1" wide icing spatula)
- Disposable gloves
- Wet wipes (antibacterial)
- Plastic clipboard
- A simple stool or folding metal chair
- A fanny-pack or vest to contain personal items (wallet or cell phone), flashlight, a pair of gloves and a pair of booties
- A change of clothes and shoes

### **3. Recommended guidelines for in-home visits—Employees should:**

- On prior to your first home visit with a client, ask if he or she has had any known infestation or treatment for any pests including bed bugs.
- Wear protective booties when a client states there is a known infestation; when conducting a home visit in a client's unit that is located in a building with a known infestation; or when you are uncertain about the presence of an infestation.
- Coveralls should be worn if the employee is going to be moving items or touching things in the residence known to be infested. The coveralls should be worn if the infestation is severe (e.g. bed bugs readily visible in areas other than around resting areas). Employee training will provide you with talking points to help you discuss this protective measure with clients.
- Do not sit on cloth-covered furniture or bedding. Pay attention to cracks and crevices of wooden or hard surface chairs.
- Bring only items necessary for the visit into the home. A plastic (or metal) clipboard can be used to hold paperwork, while a "fanny" pack or vest can be used to hold a wallet and other personal items, in addition to a spare pair of gloves and booties.
- Store personal items securely in your vehicle prior to arriving at the location.
- Avoid placing any items on upholstered furniture or bedding or on carpeted floors.
- Upon completion of the visit, take the following steps if bed bugs are found during the home visit:
  1. Return to your vehicle.
  2. Perform a self-inspection.
  3. Remove protective booties immediately following the visit. Place them in a sealed plastic bag and dispose of the bag.
  4. If a protective suit was worn, suit should be removed so that it is turned inside out as it is taken off so as to trap any bugs inside the suit. Immediately place all protective gear in a plastic bag and seal it; then dispose of the bag in an outdoor receptacle.
- Laying a plastic drum liner on the floor enables you to remove these garments on a clean surface that would make most bed bugs visible. Rolling the liner up will enable you to contain coveralls, booties and any possible insects. Seal the plastic in another bag and dispose as mentioned.
- Drum liners are also useful for containing articles suspected to have an infestation and can be used as temporary seat covers when transporting people (if clean clothes are unavailable or if an inspection of the person cannot be conducted).
  - Remember: on-person infestations are usually uncommon, although they do happen with severe infestations or in cases where the person is in bed or a wheel chair.
  - Note: a plastic seat cover is not recommended for the driver as it may affect vehicular operation.

- Perform a self-inspection for pests immediately after leaving and before entering another facility or a vehicle. Pay attention to inside and outside of shoes, lace holes, socks, leg area and around hands and arms.
- If you find a bed bug or other insect (e.g. cockroach), use the wet wipes to contain or crush the insect. Wipe the surrounding areas with another wet wipe as a precaution. Pay attention to corners, crevices and seams. Alternately, a spatula can be used to crush or remove the insect.

The employee who may have contracted bed bugs should notify a Supervisor and return to their home. The employee should remove all clothing before entering their home (or near the entry door) and immediately place these items in a plastic bag that can be tightly closed via a knot or twist tie. Wash contaminated clothing in hot, soapy water and dry in a dryer using the highest heat setting that the fabric can safely withstand. The employee should take a shower or bath. Any clothing or items taken into the home that cannot be washed or dry cleaned should be placed in a hot dryer for at least 15 minutes. If items are taken to a dry cleaner, inform the cleaner of the possibility of bed bugs.

#### **4. Suggestions**

The guidelines and the following suggestions were gathered from employees, other agencies that have successfully served clients with infestations over the years, as well as input from an entomologist. These practices may help avoid transporting bugs from one client to another or into your own home.

- Keep your car clean of clutter, vacuum weekly, and monitor for infestation.
- In a separate bag, keep a second pair of shoes and another jacket (if desired) for use in client homes.
- Discourage the sharing of vacuum cleaners by consumers as this can be a means of transmission of hidden bed bugs. If using a vacuum or vacuum attachment in an infested residence, it is a good idea to finish up by sealing the vacuum bag with tape or place the vacuum bag inside a plastic bag, and then discard the bag in an outdoor container.
- Do not redistribute items from one client to another as this is a common means of bed bug transmission. Bed bugs are excellent hitchhikers that can hide in furniture, clothing, or other items brought from infested areas.