



Suggested Protocol for Bed Bug Inspections



(510) 567-6800 • www.acvcgsd.org

Alameda County Department of Environmental Health

Although some of the following measures may sound extreme, putting into practice a strict prevention protocol is the only way to proactively protect you from transporting hitch-hiking bed bugs. Vector Control Biologist who routinely responds to calls about bed bug infestations are at risk of transporting bed bugs from callers' homes to the office, car, or home.

Preparing for Home Visits

Before going to a client's home or apartment, contact the client, and ask if there have been any insect infestations in the last 2-3 months. This will help in your preparation for the visit.

- Wear simple clothes.
- Avoid shirts with buttons and pockets.
- Avoid cargo pants and cuffed pants.
- Wear shoes that can be heated in clothes dryer.
- Avoid accessories, especially scarves, jewelry, and handbags.
- Carry a supply of sealable plastic bags (such as Ziploc® plastic bags).
- While at the client's home, take the following precautions. Be extra diligent if a bed bug infestation has been confirmed at the home.
- Wear protective shoe covers (booties). Inform the client that the booties help protect against potentially having insects transported into the client's home.
- Do not sit on upholstered furniture or on the bed. Inspect the cracks of hard chairs before sitting down. If possible, bring a hard surface chair or plastic stool.

- Carry only essential items into the home. Use a plastic clipboard to hold any paperwork.
- Avoid placing any belongings on upholstered furniture, bedding or against the walls.
- When there is an infestation and the purpose of the visit is to move items or to move the person, wear white coveralls or a Tyvek® suit. If the coveralls have top pockets, secure them with duct tape.

Discovering Bed Bugs at a Client's Home or Apartment

If bed bugs are discovered at the client's residence, remain calm. Take the following steps to avoid transporting the bed bugs out of the client's home.

- When returning to the car, remove the booties immediately and seal them in a plastic bag. Dispose of the bag before getting into the car. If the client lives in a multi-unit dwelling, remove the protective gear just outside the client's door. Do not leave the shoe covers on while walking through the building. Place them in a tightly sealed bag and place the bag in an outdoor trash receptacle.
- If coveralls were worn, remove the coveralls by turning them inside out and trapping any bed bugs inside. Put the coveralls in a plastic bag and seal the bag before getting into the vehicle.
- Use a hand mirror to inspect yourself for bed bugs or have your partner check the areas not visible to you. Check clothes, shoe treads, cuffs, and collar.
- If an insect is found, use a wet wipe to capture it. Place it in a Ziploc® bag for identification. Use a second wet wipe to wipe down seams, buttons, and other bed bug hiding places.
- Instruct the client to report the infestation to the landlord as soon as possible.



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Repeat Visits at Infested Homes

For repeated visits to a home with a known bed bug infestation, make a bed bug containment kit. The bed bug containment kit should include the following:

- Portable, hard surface chair or stool. If planning to sit down.
- Coveralls or Tyvek® suit, Tyvek® pants, disposable gloves and booties.
- Spare clothes in vehicle.
- Small bag to hold personal items and plastic clipboard.
- Duct tape, hand magnifier lens, and powerful flashlight.
- Trash, Ziploc bags, and plastic bin.
- Disinfecting wipes.

After Visiting a Client's Home

After a visit to a client's home, return to the office directly. Take precaution by removing clothes and shoes and placing them in a disposable bag and put in the dryer on high heat for 30 minutes. Heat kills bed bugs in all life stages.

If a bed bug is found on clothing, remove the work clothes outside of the home or in the bathroom immediately. Put the clothes and shoes in a separate, sealed or tied bag and keep it separate from the general laundry. Wash the clothes at the highest recommended setting and tumble dry the clothes and shoes for 30 minutes on high heat (120 degrees or above).

The following additional practices may help avoid transporting bed bugs from a client's home and into the office:

- Keep the vehicle clear of clutter; inspect it frequently; vacuum weekly.
- Keep a pair of shoes and a jacket for use only in clients' homes in a sealed container in the county vehicle.
- Discourage clients from sharing their vacuum cleaner with neighbors or other residents.

- Discourage clients from accepting clothes, furniture, or other items from friends or neighbors.
- Always keep informed about bed bugs in order to offer clients accurate bed bug information.



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