

Bed bug infestations in multi-family complexes

One of the most annoying and costly pests that commercial properties – especially apartment and condominium complexes – must contend with are bed bugs.

A bed bug infestation in an apartment or condo is rarely limited to only that unit. Because bed bugs are skilled travelers, they can easily move between units on plumbing pipes, electrical wiring, furniture, luggage, and people. And if a unit previously has had bed bugs, it is more likely to be reinfested.

When property managers call their pest management service provider to perform a bed bug inspection, be assured that the units next door, above, and below will be inspected as well.

Preventive measures for bed bugs

What can property managers do to prevent a bed bug infestation from taking over their complex?

Jared Bitton, branch manager for Clark Pest Control in Riverside, CA, says that in addition to regular inspections using canine teams and installing monitoring units in apartments, focusing on education is the key to success.

"We focus on educating property managers and residents on what they can do to lower the risk," says Britton. "Going over move-in and move-out procedures, recognizing the signs of a possible

infestation, and the importance of reporting issues, are all critical to a successful bed bug program."


Clark also focuses on training maintenance staff members on how to check monitoring units for bed bug activity and the locations where bed bugs are likely to be most active.


"It's an eye-opening experience for many of them," says Britton.


"The more we can train them on how, what, and where to look, the better. The more proactive the approach, the better the results."


Where to look for bed bugs?

The focus of training residents and the maintenance staff is teaching them where to look for bed bugs. Included in the training are the following helpful tips:

 Bed bugs are very cryptic in nature, but often reside within 10 feet of their food source.

 Their food source is an idle human. Someone walking around the apartment will not be targeted, but someone asleep or reclined in the living room watching television is a perfect host.

 Prime real estate for bed bugs would be the underside of the box spring, backside of a bedframe or headboard in a bedroom, or a favorite spot in the living room.

 Bed bugs do not like to be disturbed, so the changing bed linens on a weekly or every-other-week basis will usually prevent them from



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residing on a mattress.

🐛 Once bed bugs occupy the prime real estate in an apartment, they will branch out from the bed into the nightstands and dressers. In the living room, they will start to invade the coffee table and ottomans. In most cases, bed bugs are not found in kitchens, bathrooms, or dining areas.

🐛 Bed bugs do not move very fast in normal situations, they do not jump, and they do not fly. When in a room of a suspected bed bug infestation, do not sit on, lean on, or brush up against upholstered surfaces, as bed bug eggs are placed with a sticky secretion that could stick to your clothing and be transported to another apartment.

Bed bugs are a costly pest

Once an infestation becomes established in an apartment or condo complex, bed bugs are difficult and costly to remove. Britton cites a 200-plus unit complex that had to deal with a six-figure expense to handle a severe bed bug problem.

The problem was so relentless that residents had to be moved to a hotel while the previous pest control company performed a fumigation treatment. Unfortunately, time and resources were not devoted to follow-up education for residents and staff, and the bed bugs returned.

When Clark took over the account, it immediately invested in education and training for residents and staff, and it implemented a program that includes monthly inspections by the maintenance staff, the installation of monitoring traps and lures, and treatments as necessary.

"The facility has a good maintenance staff who are very much a partner in the process," adds Britton.

Clark also deploys technology to help monitor bed bug activity. Each apartment has a unique bar code on the door, and any time that activity is detected, the technician scans the bar code. This enables Clark to maintain a detailed history on each unit and be proactive instead of reactive in their treatments. 🐛



If you're looking for a pest management partner that understands your business and can help your company create a pest-free environment inside and out, call Clark Pest Control at (800) 936-3339.



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