BED BUGS

INTRODUCTION

Bed bugs (Cimex lectularius) are parasitic insects that feed exclusively on blood, and prefer human hosts. The nickname “bed bug” comes from their tendency to live on or near beds and other furniture since they want to live near humans, but not directly on their host (contrary to lice). Bed bug infestations will more than likely lead to time off of work, so it is important to avoid them if possible.

GENERAL INFORMATION

Bed bugs are reddish brown with flat bodies about the size of an apple seed. They do not fly, and instead of traveling directly on your body or clothing, are usually transferred from place to place by hiding in luggage or shoes. Some of their tendencies include:

- Usually being most active from 10 PM to 6 AM.
- Can survive without feeding for up to a year.
- Bed bugs are not repelled by conventional insect repellants.
- Bed bugs have a distinct odor.

HEALTH PROBLEMS

Bed bugs have been known to carry human pathogens, but it is unclear whether or not these can be transferred from host to host. Even if they are not capable of spreading diseases, bed bug bites may cause allergic symptoms, skin rashes, and even negative psychological effects. Their bite will cause itchy welts to form anywhere from 2-14 days after the incident.

INSPECTION

The best way to determine if you have a bed bug infestation is to check for signs of them. It may be necessary to hire a professional to accurately confirm or deny the presence of bed bugs.

- Check for tiny bugs along the seams of your mattress by lifting the sheets.
- Inspect wood or upholstered furniture along all seams or crevices.
- Presence of previously shed exoskeletons or egg cases.
- Tiny blood spots on the sheets or mattress may be present.
- Dark, sand-like fecal spots along mattress seams or near crevices may be present.

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TREATMENT

Bed bug resistant mattress covers are available for purchase, but while they will help to keep bed bugs out of your mattress, they will not prevent bed bugs from moving into your home or business as they do not live exclusively in mattresses.

- Professional fumigation or steam treatments are usually required.
- Wash or dry clean all linens, clothes, and even curtains in the affected area.
- It may be necessary to replace some items such as couches or mattresses.

CONCLUSION

Bed bugs affect people and facilities from any location, income level, or title. Regular inspections and early treatment is the best way to solve this problem and continue with your normal work day.