

OSHN Shared Services Project

Best Practices: Managing Bed Bugs

The OSHN Shared Services Project is exploring ways in which housing providers can sell and purchase services related to pest management. As part of the feasibility work for this, Cahdco, the Project Manager for Phase III of the OSHN Shared Services Project, engaged housing providers to discuss their pest management experience. Phase III of the OSHN Shared Services Project is funded by the [Community Housing Transformation Centre \(CHTC\)](#).

After speaking one-on-one with representatives from sixteen housing providers, the following fourteen steps were determined to be best practices when dealing with bed bugs, as we heard them from the housing providers.

It is our hope that this list will help you to manage pests more efficiently, resulting in fewer infestations, fewer chemicals treatments, and ultimately fewer costs to the housing provider.

14 Steps to Manage Bed Bugs

1. Traps are laid out for pests and monitored frequently to be aware of any pest activity the moment it happens.
2. Activity is noticed from a trap or a tenant contacts the housing provider because they noticed activity in their unit.
3. An inspection is done of the area where the activity is noticed and follows a “block” approach.
 - A block approach is when the unit with activity is inspected as well as all of the units surrounding it and continues to move outwards until there is no more activity detected.
 - Some housing providers track this in an excel sheet where each unit is represented as a square.
4. The inspection should assess the level of activity. The assessment is recommended to have 3 levels: major cases, ~20 cases, no cases.
5. Prior to the use of any chemicals, a number of actions can be taken:
 - Steaming
 - Vacuuming
 - Providing a bed bug cover for the mattress
 - Stripping the unit of linens and bagging them, heat treating the bags, which kills the eggs, and then linens are returned inside of new bags
6. Re-inspect the units using the same block strategy.
7. If there is still activity, chemical treatments can be used. A contractor should be called at this time.
8. The tenant will need to properly prepare their unit in advance of treatment. An information sheet must be provided to the tenant outlining the tasks they need to complete to prepare.
9. It is advised that the housing provider check if the unit is adequately prepared **before** the technician arrives. If the unit is not prepared when the technician arrives, the housing provider may be charged for the visit, even though no treatment took place.
10. The technician will treat the infected unit(s).
11. The unit(s) will need to be treated a second time, two weeks after the first treatment. Again, the housing provider should ensure that the unit is prepared because if not, the first treatment will be in vain.
12. The unit(s) should be re-inspected with the block strategy to determine if there is any further activity.
13. Repeat steps as required until there is no further pest activity.
14. The technician will provide a report to the housing provider after treatment, which should be filed. It may contain information for the tenant regarding the unit and how to prevent further pest activity.

Other things of note:

- Cockroaches and farrow ants cannot be killed with sprayed chemicals, only gel treatments.
- Bed bugs are not killed by cold weather. If something is left outside all winter it can have dormant bed bugs that wake up once inside a unit.
- Some housing providers pre-treat units prior to new tenants moving in.
- Heat tents can be used for items like wheelchairs.
- Shared spaces, like garbage rooms, should be continuously monitored for activity and/or sprayed.