

RESPONSE TO BED BUGS IN MOVING & STORAGE



DEVELOPED BY THE NATIONAL PEST MANAGEMENT ASSOCIATION



Bed bugs are a nationwide problem, and moving and storage companies risk picking up bed bugs along with furniture and personal items. These bed bugs may contaminate the furniture and possessions of other clients in the same van or in a storage-in-transit warehouse, sometimes causing infestations in the clients' new location. Bed bugs can also find hiding places in the moving van itself or in the warehouse. These guidelines will help moving and storage companies minimize the risk of picking up bed bug-infested materials, avoid contamination between loads, and prevent the spread of bed bugs to new clients and locations.

WHAT TO AVOID

- Do not ignore evidence of bed bugs either at the pick-up location or during transit.
- Do not have untrained employees apply insecticide sprays or fogs to control bed bugs.
- Do not fail to document all actions taken by the company related to bed bugs.

BE PROACTIVE

- Develop a written "bed bug action plan" in advance with specific procedures and specific personnel responsibilities for responding to various types of bed bug incidents including seeing bed bugs during packing or loading, find-

ing bed bugs in a moving van, and complaints of bed bugs in delivered materials.

- Provide information to clients about bed bugs and moving including:
 - General information on bed bug biology, prevention, and control.
 - Bed bug requirements for clients (to be included in service agreements/contracts and moving instruction handouts).
 - Actions taken by the moving company to avoid bed bug contamination between loads.
 - Requirements for clients to ensure that their possessions are bed bug-free, and their options to ensure this.
 - Company actions and options if bed bugs are found in materials being moved.
- Have a relationship with one or more qualified pest management professionals who can provide services such as inspections (including canine inspections), disinfection of vehicles and goods (traditional treatments, fumigation, and/or heat treatment), and bed bug management in storage facilities.
- Institute a scheduled professional bed bug inspection and monitoring program for moving vans and storage facilities with heavier emphasis on those servicing urban areas and other sites at high risk of bed bug infestation.
- Minimize the risk of bed bugs in the seams and folds of moving blankets and pads with one or more of the following options:
 - Reducing or eliminating the use of blankets in favor of wrapping furniture in plastic.
 - Using washable or dry-cleanable blankets and pads and cleaning them between trips.
 - Cleaning blankets and pads with high-pressure vacuum extraction.
 - Regularly cycling new blankets and pads into the rotation and removing used ones.
 - Heat treating or fumigating blankets and pads after each trip.
- Educate drivers, packers, moving crews, estimators, and storage staff about bed bugs including:



- o Basic bed bug biology and habits.
- o How to recognize bed bugs and other signs of their presence.
- o Where to look for bed bugs and their signs at the client's home, in furniture and possessions, in the moving van, and in storage.
- o What to do if bed bugs are discovered.
- Make it a policy that moving crews inspect every site and its contents before and during packing and transfer of materials into the moving van.
- For every move, document that the moving team has proactively checked for bed bugs for every load.
- Have options available for moving clients that have bed bugs. Options can include one or more of the following:
 - o Refusing the move.
 - o Requiring a letter from a pest control professional before allowing the move stating that the site has been inspected and there is no evidence of an active bed bug infestation.
 - o Offering the option of disinfecting the shipped materials either by professional fumigation or heat treatment in the moving van or in a separate container. (Note: Additional preparation of materials may be required.)
- Document all actions related to bed bugs. Keep careful records of bed bug incidents and complaints by vehicle and by route in order to determine high-risk areas, and to minimize your liability risk.
- Collect a few specimens for identification by a professional. Save the specimens in alcohol in a sealed and labeled vial.
- If a complaint is received after delivery, investigate the complaint as per the protocol in the company's bed bug action plan and direction by the insurance company.
- Remove an infested vehicle from service until it has been treated. Inspect the vehicle again 1-2 weeks after treatment to ensure that all bed bugs have been eliminated.
- Bed bug service of moving vans may include one or more of the following:
 - o Insecticide applications applied into cracks, crevices, and other harborage.
 - o Steam or spot cold treatment to kill bed bugs especially in cracks and crevices.
 - o Vacuuming to eliminate clusters of bed bugs (as a supplement to other types of service).
 - o Heat treatment or fumigation of the moving van.
- If a load with bed bugs has been transferred to a storage-in-transit facility:
 - o The load should be isolated.
 - o The site should be inspected, preferably by a certified bed bug canine service.
 - o Pest control action should be taken as appropriate and as soon as possible.
 - o The site and stored materials should be reinspected 1-2 weeks after treatment to verify control success.

RESPONDING TO A BED BUG INCIDENT

- If bed bugs are found at the pick-up point before loading begins, do not load the moving van unless the company has an option for professional heat treatment or fumigation of the moving van and its contents, and the client authorizes the service.
- If bed bugs are found after loading has begun, loading should stop until the moving team receives direction from company management.
 - o If the company has a heat treatment or fumigation option, the client should be given the option of paying for disinfection and, if authorized, loading can continue.
 - o If the client refuses to authorize the disinfection, the items should be returned to the client.
 - o Depending on the circumstances, the moving van will require some level of pest control action before returning to service ranging from professional technician or canine inspection to insecticide application, heat treatment, or fumigation.

BED BUG PREVENTION

- Institute regular "deep" cleaning of moving van interiors:
 - o Inspect for the signs of bed bugs: live bugs, shed skins, spotting, and eggs.
 - o Aggressively vacuum all cracks and crevices.
- Consider regular and frequent inspection of all vehicles and storage sites using a qualified bed bug detection dog.
- Consider placement of bed bug monitoring devices around storage facilities. (Note: These devices vary in performance. Get professional advice)
- Consider heat treatment of the empty moving van (and blankets and pads) at the completion of each run.
- Require new packing boxes for each move.

For detailed information on bed bugs, control options, guidance on working with professionals or to find a local pest management professional, please visit www.pestworld.org.