

Prevention & Control

Bed Bugs in Multi-Unit Housing

Multi-unit housing such as apartment buildings, condominiums, group homes, shelters and dormitories, may be the most difficult structures from which to eradicate bed bugs. **Bed bug elimination in multi-unit housing depends on the knowledge, effort and cooperation of all persons involved**, including landlords, building managers, residents, and pest control professionals.

GUIDELINES

- When bed bugs are thought to be present, immediately inform the building manager.
- To confirm an infestation, specimens should be identified by an entomologist or pest management professional.
- When an infestation is confirmed, residents should be provided guidelines on building treatment policies, instructed to avoid ineffective and potentially harmful pesticide use including the use of aerosol “foggers,” and informed on how to detect and prevent the spread of bed bugs by not bringing potentially infested items into theirs or other units.
- For each unit, management should ensure bed bugs are prevented from moving between units by sealing gaps around vents and pipes penetrating common walls, sealing around floor registers and light fixtures, as well as around phone, cable and electrical outlets.
- **Do not delay treatment!** Employ a pest control professional as soon as possible because bed bugs will reproduce and spread, making their control much more difficult and costly.
- Tenants should be advised to prepare their units by eliminating clutter, laundering and granting access for inspection and treatment. If possible, mattresses and box springs should be enclosed in “encasements,” and traps should be applied to bed legs.
- *At a minimum*, infested units and all units above, below and adjacent to infested units, plus common areas such as hallways and laundry rooms, should be inspected and treated as necessary.
- Follow-up inspections and treatments should be performed about every two weeks after initial treatment, until no bites or bed bugs are observed for at least two months.



Adult bed bug

Photo: U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention



Bed bug nymph after feeding

Photo: University of Florida