

## Greenburgh Housing Authority Pest Control Policy(Bed Bugs)

The Greenburgh Housing Authority is committed to managing pests using Integrated Pest Management (IPM). IPM includes early detection of new infestations through regular inspection and monitoring, preventing pests by exclusion, design and good sanitation and taking appropriate control actions when necessary. Control actions may include cleaning and removing pests with a vacuum or trap. IPM principles are implemented by the most economical means and with the least possible hazard to people, property and the environment.

In order to successfully eradicate a bed bug infestation, it is essential that all people involved work together. Greenburgh Housing Authority understands the following about property-wide bed bug control:

- Although bed bugs are not known to transmit blood borne diseases, they cause a lot of stress to people and can be the cause of skin infections and allergic reactions. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) classify bed bugs as a pest of public health significance.
- Regardless of how the infestation started, it was certainly unintentional and if there is no cooperation everyone loses. There should be no shame associated with having bed bugs in an apartment. Although clutter makes it more difficult to eradicate bed bugs, cleanliness cannot prevent the problem from occurring. Denial, shame and blame only make the situation worse. Once an infestation has been identified, the most important thing is to take steps to eliminate it and prevent spread.
- Early detection and intervention is the goal of the IPM program. To reach this goal, Greenburgh Housing Authority will conduct a building-wide inspection and monitoring for all pests of all rooms every six months in buildings with known infestations and once a year in buildings without infestation. This inspection and monitoring will consist of questioning residents and staff, visual inspection, monitor placement and possibly the use of bed bug detecting canines.
- Once a bed bug infestation has been identified, it takes considerable work to get rid of it. Effective treatment requires the cooperation of at least three parties working together: resident, PHA staff and the pest management professional (PMP). Without the participation of all three, it will be nearly impossible to eliminate an infestation. If a tenant cannot prepare for treatment, the PHA may need to reach out to family or local support groups.
- Many people are uninformed about bed bugs, and they don't understand what must be done to eradicate this pest. If you feel that a resident, contractor or property manager isn't handling the situation properly, suggest that they read through this document and view the suggested resources.

**For bed bugs, Greenburgh Housing Authority is utilizing IPM according to the plan detailed below.**

## PREVENTION

• **Internal outreach efforts:** Greenburgh Housing Authority educates our PHA community about bed bugs. To ensure material is science-based and correct, PHA consults with bed bug experts. Information includes pictures of bed bugs, where they like to hide, how to avoid bringing bed bugs home and what residents should do if they find a bed bug in their unit. The following are used to deliver the information:

- Articles in the PHA newsletter
- A video and information on IPM shared during move-in and at annual re-sign
- Flyers delivered to residents
- Posters in common areas including laundry rooms
- Training sessions conducted by qualified pest management professionals for staff and residents.

• **External outreach efforts:** An infestation of bed bugs can begin from any number of sources. In multifamily housing, common sources may include:

- used furniture,
- friends and family who are visiting or hosting residents and
- visiting professionals such as cleaning contractors and home health aides.

To get at these various sources of bed bugs Greenburgh Housing Authority educates people in our community associated with these sources on how to avoid spreading bed bugs. The following are used to deliver the information:

- Flyers delivered to agencies, residents, and visitors
- Posters in common areas where visitors travel
- Training sessions conducted by qualified pest management professionals for staff and residents to which professionals outside the PHA are invited
- Local mass media

• **Unit turnover and move- in procedures:** Staff and contractors working in vacant units inspect for bed bugs on items left by the former resident, around the unit and behind fixtures such as baseboards. Admission staff asks new residents about any previous exposure to bed bugs and provides information on how to limit the chance of bringing bed bugs to the property. Housing is not to be denied because of previous bed bug exposure, but the PHA works with the resident and a PMP to ensure belongings are moved into the new home without bed bugs.

• **Disposing of large items:** Only items specified by the PMP servicing the unit should be disposed of. Residents are to wrap infested items in plastic before moving them out of the unit and to destroy the items once they are outside to prevent others from retrieving infested items and bringing them home. Any large item left outside for trash pick up is considered infested and promptly removed from the property.

• **Reducing the likelihood of bed bugs in common areas:** It is difficult (but not impossible)

for bed bugs to climb smooth surfaces like plastic and metal. Furniture in common areas, including seats used by residents in the main office, are made of plastic or metal to reduce the likelihood that the furniture will hide bed bug. Monitors are installed where possible and checked during routine pest inspection. Numerous plastic storage containers are present in common areas. Each resident is to place his or her personal belongings such as a coat and bag into an individual storage container during meetings. Remember that everyone is at risk for getting bed bugs.

- **Preventing spread by PHA staff:** When possible, staff meets with residents in common areas where plastic or metal furniture is available. If office staff must meet with a resident in a unit, staff only brings essential items into the unit and will not sit or set items on upholstered furniture.

### EARLY DETECTION

- **Reporting bed bug evidence:** Residents, staff, and contractors must immediately report any bed bugs or evidence of bed bugs anywhere on the property to Greenburgh Housing Authority Management.
- **Bed bug inspections:** Common areas such as laundry facilities, lobbies and community rooms are visually inspected by qualified pest management professionals as part of the regular service.
- **Making inspection easier by using mattress/box spring encasements:** Proper fitting fabric mattress encasements on both the mattress and box spring protect the mattress and keep bed bugs out of the interior of box springs which is very hard to inspect and treat. Residents may purchase encasements from the exterminator. If the resident has a bed frame, he or she should pad sharp edges that might tear the encasement. Once installed on the mattress, residents should use duct tape to tape over the zipper pull to ensure that it remains fully closed. Beds must be made into islands to the extent that the room and furniture permit. This entails keeping the area under the bed free of clutter and pulling the bed or mattress at least 10 inches away from all walls and bedside furniture. No bed skirts are permitted. Although not required, using light colored bedding will make inspection easier.
- **Encouraging compliance with reporting pests:** A bed bug infestation can be stopped quickly and with minimal financial consequences if all members of the IPM team (housing, residents and the PMPs) are involved early-on in the infestation. Greenburgh Housing Authority wishes to promote resident compliance with inspecting units and reporting infestations and will not charge a resident for initial pest control treatment nor ask the resident to discard belongings unless it is absolutely necessary for effective treatment. However, if a resident does not comply with the PMP's preparation instructions resulting in the PMP not being able to treat the unit properly, GHA will engage the services of an independent Pest control contractor to do the preparation and the Tenant will be charged for their services. The resident's failure to cooperate and Non Compliance with the PMP's preparation instructions for treatment for bed bug infestation shall be deemed a breach of the Residents lease and grounds for lease termination by housing management.

## DOCUMENTATION

- **Identifying trends:** To better track the spread of bed bugs throughout our community, plan bed bug treatments and gauge the success of our bed bug management program, bed-bug-specific records will include inspection findings, education efforts and treatment details. The records are kept in the work order system and analyzed by the Maintenance supervisors at least 2 times a year to identify building-specific patterns of infestation. The work order system should include information from the PMP's service report, which includes the following for each unit:
  1. Unit access
  2. Pest type(s)
  3. Degree of infestation(s)
  4. Housekeeping
  5. Compliance with preparation instructions
  6. Control measures taken
  7. Time in and time out

## TREATMENT

- **Confirming infestation:** Before any treatment is scheduled, live bed bugs must be found and identified by trained staff or a PMP.
- **Involving a qualified PMP:** Once an infestation is confirmed, the PMP is called to inspect and possibly treat the infested unit and all adjacent units within one week. PHA staff works with both the PMP, resident and the resident's family or support service provider to ensure that everyone involved understands the preparation instructions, any of the resident's medical issues that may impact the treatment plan and how to prevent future infestations. All expenses for the PMP's work is paid for by the PHA unless a charge is incurred because the PMP was unable to service the unit due to resident refusal of service or failure to follow preparation instructions.
- **Planning the treatment:** After inspecting the infested unit and (when an active infestation is found) all adjacent units, the PMP proposes a treatment plan, including pesticide product choice (if needed) to the property manager for approval. Treatment plans are approved after considering the burden on the resident, cost of service and risk to people, property and the environment.
- **Bed bug treatments:** A bed bug treatment always requires at least two visits: the first to inspect, plan treatment and possibly do some treatment; the second is to follow up, kill emerged nymphs or confirm bed bug control. More often, treatment requires three or more visits and may take months. The less team members cooperate, the longer the treatment will take. Control is defined as seeing no live bed bugs and the resident not reporting any new bites or sightings. Elimination is considered to be a 45-day period of control.
- **Discouraging use of store-bought pesticides:** Over-the-counter sprays and foggers are not

effective for bed bug control. A licensed PMP does all pesticide application targeting bed bugs.

