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## BED BUG TREATMENT PROTOCOLS AND PROCEDURES

The current best practice strategy for bed bugs is...

- To always first confirm the presence of bed bugs via a thorough inspection. The presence of the bugs, their eggs, or their fecal deposits is the only true confirmation of activity. Reports of “bites” neither confirms nor denies the presence of live bed bugs as not everyone reacts to bites and “bite marks” can be from an allergic reaction to something else, or reaction to bites from mites or fleas or spiders.
- Fully treat infested rooms and encase mattresses and box springs in certified bed bug proof covers.
- Fully inspect and then treat perimeters of all rooms above, below and beside infested rooms, and encase box springs and mattresses in these rooms (referred to as Partial/Perimeter treatments).
  - Expand Full and Partial/Perimeter treatments as new infestations are found.
- Follow up with another treatment in all infested rooms 10-14 days after the initial treatment. Follow up with an inspection in all surrounding rooms 10-14 days after the initial treatment.
  - Continue follow up treatments and inspections every 2 weeks until no new evidence is reported or found.
  - If this is followed, and cooperation by residents is excellent, the majority of units will be free of bed bugs in three treatments. If the infestation is small and newly established, two treatments are often sufficient.

The reasons for this approach are as follows...

### Encasements -

- 80% of bed bugs are found on the “bed complex” (the mattress, box spring, bed frame, headboard, nightstands). Most of those 80% are in and on the box spring and mattress. Bugs or their eggs inside box springs and mattresses cannot usually be completely eliminated with steam or traditional pesticides due to lack of penetration of the material inside, the ability of the bugs to wait longer than the residuals are effective, and the fact that we cannot legally apply residual pesticides to a mattress.
- Encasing mattresses and box springs traps *most* of the current problem inside so they cannot escape or bite through the cover, and no pesticide is applied to the bed.
  - Other bed bugs in the room, in surrounding rooms, or that are otherwise re-introduced cannot infest their preferred harborage (the mattress and box spring), and will now be much easier to spot on the white covers. New infestations can be found earlier and they will typically be smaller in number and easier to deal with.
  - New replacement beds won't have to be thrown out if they are encased, and encasements are much cheaper than purchasing new mattresses and box springs.

**Follow-ups** - Inspections or treatments need to be done every 14 days because eggs hatch 6-10 days after being laid, and bugs hiding and resting deep in untreatable cracks will typically emerge within 5-14 days to feed again. The residual action of most traditional pesticides is not very effective at eliminating these newly active insects, so a new treatment must often take place.

**Surrounding Rooms** – Most studies find that surrounding rooms are *already* infested 20% of the time, and treatments can often cause bed bugs to spread, so it is best to proactively get ahead of the bugs by performing inspections and partial/perimeter treatments in all rooms surrounding those already known to be infested instead of waiting for complaints.

**Recommendations and Reports** – We will complete detailed reports on each bed bug service we do encompassing level of infestation, level of preparation, whether or not surrounding units were addressed, and whether or not encasements were installed or infested furniture removed. There are many other specific things that can be done to bed bug proof rooms and properties, as well as other treatment strategies which may be necessary, and we will be making those site specific recommendations as well.

**“Cooperation is the key and clutter is the killer” – Preparations must be complete!** Cluttered areas are untreatable areas, and incomplete preparations leads to control failure, unnecessary pesticide use and exposure, and extra follow-ups and the related additional costs.

If you have any questions or concerns about any of this information, or any other pest control issue, please give us a call.