

BED BUG POLICY

Bed bugs are a growing national problem, and as a result, this policy has been created for the protection of Elberton Housing Authority (EHA) residents and their guests. The purpose of this policy is to set forth the roles and responsibilities of all parties (EHA and Resident) in minimizing the potential for bed bugs. The policy will also provide guidance in cases where bed bugs are present in order to eliminate them as quickly as possible.

Bed bugs are difficult to contain without the proper treatment. Therefore it is imperative that all parties work simultaneously toward a common goal, extermination and elimination. Left untreated, bed bugs can spread throughout a residence affecting current and future residents as well as neighbors on all sides of the infested unit.

MANAGEMENT ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES WHEN BED BUGS ARE PRESENT

Upon notification from the tenant, EHA, within 24 hours, will contact the tenant, provide the tenant with information about the control and prevention of bed bugs and discuss measures the tenant may be able to take in the unit before the inspection is performed.

EHA, within 3 business days of a tenant complaint if possible, should perform an initial inspection of the resident's dwelling using the "Maintenance Tracking Sheet". If it is determined that bed bugs are present, EHA will provide the resident with the "EHA Resident Roles and Responsibilities" document. This document will be explained to the resident to ensure understanding and compliance prior to treatment. In addition, EHA will secure the residents signature indicating understanding of the document. Upon successful completion by the resident of their roles and responsibilities, EHA will professionally treat the residence and perform follow-up to ensure treatment was successful.

In order to educate residents and minimize potential for the presence of bed bugs, EHA has created a "Prevention Tips" document.

RESIDENT ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES WHEN BED BUGS ARE PRESENT

HUD regulations require the resident's cooperation in order to successfully eliminate the presence of bed bugs. Therefore, it is the resident's responsibility to report the suspicion or presence of bed bugs as soon as the presence of bed bugs is suspected. This will allow EHA to address the potential infestation at its onset and before it affects other residents. In addition, the resident must be onsite when the initial inspection is conducted. If it is determined by EHA that bed bugs are present, the resident must complete all items listed on the "EHA & Resident Roles and Responsibilities" prior to treatment and as soon as possible. This will help to minimize the severity of bed bug presence and resolve the problem quickly. A resident may be deemed in violation of, but not limited to, section 27, attachment 3 of their lease agreement if they fail to fully cooperate and comply with their roles and responsibilities.

BED BUG MANAGEMENT PLAN AND EXTERMINATOR SELECTION TIPS

The information listed below is from the New York Times article “Sleeping with the Enemy (Bed Bugs)”. Please note that the information listed is provided as a reference only. If the presence of bed bugs is suspected, immediate action should be taken.

- Most successful treatment efforts include a combination of removing clutter, thorough cleaning and sorting, along with repeated professional bed bug treatment applications.
- Many pest control companies will perform a visual inspection at no charge.
- According to the article, consumers should be wary of pest control companies that emphasize their bed bug expertise.
- Find an established pest control company that has been in business at least five years.
- The article states that exterminators may charge \$250 to \$900 (prices vary upwards of \$1000 per unit) a room to eradicate bed bugs, depending on the level of infestation and the types of treatments used. Prices in our local area may vary.
- Be sure the exterminator makes a least one follow-up visit. According to the article it’s near impossible to kill all bed bugs in a given area with one treatment.
- Ask if follow-up treatments are included in the price quoted.
- Check to see that the company and technician being considered are licensed in the state.
- Check the Better Business Bureau for any complaints filed against the exterminators being considering.

EHA & RESIDENT ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES ONCE BED BUGS ARE FOUND PRESENT IN THE UNIT

It has been determined, based on the inspection of your residence that bed bugs are present and professional treatment is required. Bed bugs are a problem that can only be solved when both parties (EHA and resident) work simultaneously toward a common goal, extermination and elimination. HUD regulations require the resident’s cooperation in order to successfully eliminate the presence of bed bugs. Without proper treatment, bed bugs are difficult to contain and have the potential to infest neighboring housing units. In addition, if a resident relocates and the proper treatment has not taken place, the bed bugs will move with the resident as bed bugs can be carried in furniture, bedding, clothing, etc. EHA will not be responsible for the reimbursement and/or replacement of any resident furniture, clothing, household items, or medical expenses.

The following plan outlines the roles and responsibilities of EHA and the resident in the treatment of bed bugs:

EHA RESPONSIBILITIES WHEN BED BUGS ARE PRESENT

- WITHIN 24 WORKING HOURS OF THE TENANT REPORT, THE EHA SHOULD MAKE CONTACT WITH THE TENANT, PROVIDE THE TENANT WITH INFORMATION ABOUT CONTROL AND PREVENTION OF BED BUGS AND DISCUSS MEASURES THE TENANT MAY BE ABLE TO TAKE IN THE UNIT BEFORE THE INSPECTION IS PERFORMED. EHA WILL INSPECT RESIDENCE FOR INFESTATION WITHIN 3 BUSINESS DAYS OF THE TENANT COMPLAINT IF POSSIBLE.
- SCHEDULE TREATMENT DATE AS SOON AS POSSIBLE ACCORDING TO THE MANAGEMENT PLAN (SUBJECT TO RESIDENT READINESS).
- Scheduled treatment date _____.

- Provide at initial inspection special bed bug mattress and box spring encasements for use on all mattresses and box springs. Resident may provide their own mattress and box spring encasements; however the EHA must approve the encasements purchased or provided by residents.
- Provide an adequate number of large trash bags at no charge to the resident for the storage of clothing, towels, toys, other linens, etc. prior to and during treatment.
- Treat residence including furniture. If infested furniture does not respond to treatment, EHA reserves the right to refuse placing furniture inside the unit. EHA will dispose of furniture at resident's request OR resident can have furniture professionally re-treated at resident's expense. Proof of re-treatment **MUST** be provided to EHA within 48 hours of determination that initial treatment was unsuccessful. If the re-treatment of furniture is deemed unsuccessful, resident may be required to remove the infested furniture from the premises.
- Perform follow-up with resident within 10 days of treatment to ensure treatment was effective.
- Perform additional treatments as necessary.

RESIDENT RESPONSIBILITIES WHEN BED BUGS ARE PRESENT

- Resident must be onsite at the scheduled time when the initial inspection is conducted.
- For treatment to be effective, resident must perform the tasks listed below prior to the scheduled treatment date. EHA encourages resident to complete items listed as soon as possible in order to minimize severity of bed bug presence and resolve the problem quickly.
 - Remove all sheets, blankets, mattress covers, pillowcases, etc. from beds and wash in hot water (120+ degrees recommended) and dry in clothes dryer on the highest heat setting for at least 30 minutes. Fold them and place them in plastic garbage bags and seal the plastic bags tightly. Do not put them back on the bed until the evening after treatment.
 - Remove everything from bedroom closets and hall closets. All closets, dresser drawers, and night stand drawers **must be empty**. Remove all clothing, toys, boxes, etc. from bedroom floors.
 - Wash all clothing, towels, and other linens in hot water (120+ degrees recommended) and dry in the dryer on the highest heat setting for at least 30 minutes. Place clean items inside airtight plastic storage bins or plastic garbage bags that are sealed tightly and store after treatment.
 - Vacuum (using disposable vacuum cleaner bags) all furniture, dresser drawers, night stand drawers, mattresses, and box springs. Place disposable vacuum cleaner bag inside plastic garbage bag that is sealed tightly and discard in outdoor trash receptacle immediately.
 - Move all furniture to the center of the room(s) being treated.
 - Discard all cardboard hangers, boxes, etc.
 - Remove all pictures from walls.
 - Place all bed bug mattress encasements on all beds. The bed bug mattress encasement is an effective bed bug deterrent when combined with treatment and **must remain on the mattress for at least one year**. If the mattress or box spring encasement cover becomes torn or damaged, it is the resident's responsibility to replace the cover.
 - Discarded mattresses, box springs, furniture, etc. must not be placed in dumpsters; they must be removed from the premises.

- Residents should remain out of the residence for four hours after treatment (includes all household members and pets).
- Furniture that does not respond to treatment must be disposed of or professionally treated. If resident chooses to dispose of furniture, EHA will remove furniture from the unit at resident's request. If resident chooses to dispose of furniture on their own it MUST be removed from the premises. If resident chooses not to dispose of infested furniture it MUST be re-treated within 48 hours by a license exterminator. If the furniture does not respond to treatment after the second professional treatment, the furniture must be removed from the premises according to the management plan until it is deemed to be free of bed bugs.
- The tenant will not be reimbursed the cost of any additional expense to the household, such as purchase of new furniture, clothing or cleaning services, etc.

FAILURE TO COMPLY: If treatment is scheduled and the exterminator determines that resident has not performed the above stated responsibilities, the following will occur:

1. Treatment may be cancelled by the exterminator or EHA until which time the above conditions are met.
2. Resident's lease may be terminated at EHA's discretion.

Bed Bug Management Plan Prevention Tips

- Wash all bedding (everything down to the mattress) regularly, at least weekly, in hot water. The water should be at least 120 degrees.
- Use bed bug encasements on all mattresses and box springs.
- Check your own bed for bed bugs from time to time. Catching them early will make bed bug treatment easier if bed bugs do occur.
- Vacuum floors regularly. Use the brush tool of your vacuum to vacuum your mattress. Use the crevice tool to vacuum crevices in the mattress and your baseboards.
- Clean up clutter to reduce hiding spots.
- Caulk holes in floors and walls.
- When purchasing second hand clothing, place all garments in a sealed bag until they can be washed and place in a dryer on high heat for 15 to 30 minutes. Wash all clothing, garments or any washable cloth item BEFORE you bring it into your house.
- If you purchase used furniture, examine it for bed bugs. Pay special attention to used mattresses and bed frames. Avoid and refuse any questionable item suspected of having bed bugs.
- When traveling, check your room for signs of bed bugs such as bloodstains on the pillows or linens. Inspect mattress seams, look behind headboards and pictures. If you suspect you may have brought bed bugs home, place infected items in the dryer or freezer.
- After you return from a trip, check your luggage for insects that might have hitched a ride. Hotels across the nation are reporting an alarming increase in bed bug infestations.

Bed bug infestations can cause health concerns, including physical discomfort and may contribute to stress and anxiety on the part of the residents. Tenants are the first line of defense against bed bug infestations and should be encouraged to create living environments that deter bed bugs. This includes reducing unreasonable amounts of clutter that create hiding places for bed bugs, and regular checking of beds and laundering of linens.

Tenants should be advised of the following:

- A PHA may not deny tenancy to a potential resident on the basis of the tenant having experienced a prior bed bug infestation, nor may an owner give residential preference to any tenant based on a response to a question regarding prior exposure to bed bugs. □ A tenant reporting bed bugs may expect expeditious response and attention by the PHA, but should be advised that inspection and, if necessary, treatment of bed bugs may take time to schedule. The inspections should occur within three calendar days of the tenant report when possible.
- Following a report of bed bugs, the PHA or a qualified third party trained in bed bug detection should inspect the dwelling unit to determine if bed bugs are present. It is critical that inspections be conducted by trained staff or third party professionals. The PHA may enter the unit to perform these activities in accordance with the lease.
- If a bed bug infestation is found in the unit, the tenant may expect treatment to begin within five days of the inspection, though depending on the form of treatment, this may not be possible. Tenants should be advised that treatment may take several weeks.
- Tenants are expected to cooperate with the treatment efforts by allowing for heat treatment of clothing and furniture and refraining from placement of infested furniture or other items in common areas such as hallways. Tenant cooperation is shown to expedite the control of bed bugs and to prevent spreading of infestations.
- Management may make staff available to help with moving and cleaning of furniture to accomplish the treatment effort.
- The tenant will not be expected to contribute to the cost of the first treatment effort.
- The tenant will not be reimbursed the cost of any additional expense to the household, such as purchase of new furniture, clothing or cleaning services, etc.