

# Let's Beat the Bug!

## Bed Bug Basics

- Bed bugs are a small insect, about the size of an apple seed. Adult bed bugs are flat, oval and reddish-brown in color.
- Bed bugs feed on human blood and can live for up to a year without a meal. They are usually active at night when people are sleeping.
- Some people do not react when bitten by a bed bug. Others who do react have a small bump or a large itchy welt depending on the severity of their reaction. Marks from these bites may appear in hours or days after being bitten. Bites usually occur on skin that is exposed during sleep and sometimes occur in lines on the skin.
- If you think you have bed bugs check for the bugs, blood stains, droppings, eggs and shed skins
  - Where you sit and where you sleep
  - In mattresses, box springs, bed frames and bedding
  - In cracks and crevices in bedroom furniture, floor boards, base boards, windows, door frames and electrical outlets

Remember, bed bugs are very small, flat and fast.

**For more information contact the bed bug hotline at 612-624-2200, 1-855-644-2200, [bedbugs@umn.edu](mailto:bedbugs@umn.edu), or visit [www.bedbugs.umn.edu](http://www.bedbugs.umn.edu)**

## Hiring a Pest Management Professional

The most effective way to deal with a bed bug infestation is to hire a Pest Management Professional (PMP), otherwise known as an “Exterminator”. Residents attempting bed bug control on their own are likely to fail. When looking for a PMP take the time to do some research and find a good company. The cheapest may not be the best option.

### Finding a Pest Management Professional

1. Use the “Find a pro” section on [www.pestworld.org](http://www.pestworld.org), the official website of the National Pest Management Association.
2. In Minnesota, a PMP must be licensed by the Minnesota Department of Agriculture (MDA) to perform commercial structural pest control. Licensed Structural Pest Control Companies and Applicators are listed on the Minnesota Department of Agriculture website: <http://www2.mda.state.mn.us/webapp/lis/pestappdefault.jsp>
3. Look in phonebook Yellow Pages under “Pest”; get recommendations from friends or neighbors.

### Questions to Ask the Pest Management Professional

When looking for a PMP to help you, we recommend that you ask the following questions:

- Ask if the company is licensed with the Minnesota Department of Agriculture? Ask to see the MDA issued license before work commences. Other states: check your state’s department of agriculture.
  - Does your company carry liability insurance?
  - Is the company affiliated with the National Pest Management Association? (The NPMA has drafted best management practices for their members to follow).
  - Check with the Better Business Bureau to learn if the company has a complaint history.
  - How much experience does the company and applicator have inspecting and treating for bed bugs? What kind of training do employees receive, and how often?
  - What is the company’s standard procedure for dealing with bed bug infestations?



### Beware of companies that:

- **Are not licensed**
- Show up for service unannounced and in unmarked vehicles
- Try to pressure you to sign a contract
- Cannot answer questions you have about their company
- Attempt to treat your property without first thoroughly inspecting for bed bugs

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- What is the length of the treatment?
- What are your (as the customer) responsibilities in helping control the infestation?
- Ask the PMP if follow up visits, after the initial treatment, are part of the management plan?
- If a heat treatment is planned, does the company also use a supplemental insecticide?
- What safety precautions need to be taken during a bed bug treatment?

## Additional Information to Know

- Effective insecticide treatments may require three types: residual chemicals that have a specific duration, immediate acting (chemicals that come in contact with bed bugs), and dust (applied to hiding areas of bed bugs away from human activity).

## Reviewing the Contract

When you have selected the pest control company that you would like to hire, carefully review the contract for:

- Company name, address, contact information
- Details on work to be completed
- Insecticides or treatment methods to be applied
- Any pre-treatment instructions you will need to follow
- Start/end date and dates for follow up visits (if necessary)
- License and insurance coverage offered by the company
- Any possible exclusions, cancellation policy, and arbitration clause to settle disputes
- Guarantee
- Price

If insecticide products are to be applied, you can request a copy of the product label and copies of the material safety data sheet (MSDS). Reputable pest control companies will provide these documents and review them with their clients as part of their service contract.

## Preparation for Treatment

Prior to the treatment date follow any instructions supplied by the PMP. Following these instructions is critical for successfully controlling bed bugs and may include:

- Laundering your clothing and bedding
- Reducing clutter, picking up all objects from the floor
- Making physical repairs to your home
- Moving furniture and items so perimeter of room is accessible
- Emptying closets, bedside tables and dressers
- Encasing mattresses and box springs

After the Pest Management Professional has completed treatment, contact the company if you have concerns or questions.

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In accordance with the Americans with Disabilities Act, this information is available in alternative forms of communication upon request by calling 651/201-6000. TTY users can call the Minnesota Relay Service at 711 or 1-800-627-3529.

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