

Approved: September 3, 2015

POLICY ON BEDBUG CONTROL

SCOPE :

Bedbug infestations have become a serious problem in housing throughout the country. Public Housing properties are not immune to infestations. Bedbugs are considered a pest of significant public health importance by the EPA and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). This details the Billerica Housing Authority's (BHA) policy regarding the prevention and control of bedbug infestations. This policy may be amended from time to time as circumstances merit.

Excess clutter can provide bedbugs with more places to hide, making early detection and targeted control difficult. The best approach to bedbug management is to prevent an infestation from occurring in the first place. Accordingly, the BHA requires tenant's (and each household member and guests) to fulfill their lease obligations, specifically "To keep (and to cause each household member and guest to keep) the leased premises in a clean and sanitary condition and promptly to remedy any lack of cleanliness or lack of sanitary condition. Tenants shall not create any condition which is likely to attract rodents or insects, to cause offensive odors, or to endanger the health of a person. Tenant and household members shall comply with all applicable obligations imposed upon them by the State Sanitary Code" (Section I of Lease). The BHA will periodically involve tenants in education for pest management so tenants may learn to identify bedbugs, create unfriendly environments for pests, and be more knowledgeable to report suspicions of bugs as soon as possible. However, any pest management program cannot be successful without tenant cooperation.

ACTION PLAN:

1. The BHA Office is to be promptly notified (by staff, tenants, household members, guests) of suspected bedbug activity;
2. Within one (1) business day, the BHA will notify a Pest Management Professional (PMP);
3. The PMP will conduct an inspection of the suspected dwelling unit(s) and will advise the BHA of its findings;
4. Should the PMP findings confirm the presence of bedbugs, the BHA will notify the adjacent (surrounding) units (i.e. above, below, left and right). Tenants of these units shall permit the PMP to access units for inspection;
5. Upon notification by the PMP, the BHA will, within two (2) business days, notify the Billerica Board of Health of the findings and location of the infestation;
6. The PMP will implement a treatment plan appropriate to the infestation and provide instructions to the tenant regarding treatment:
 - i. Tenants shall cooperate with the BHA and the PMP in the inspection and treatment of unit(s);
 - ii. Tenants of infested units are obligated to follow the recommendations of the PMP;
 - iii. Until the PMP declares the infestation eradicated, tenants of infected units are also instructed to launder their clothing and linens, placing items in plastic bags so as not to spread bed bugs during transport to the laundry. Only new bags should be used and used only once. After use, bags should be sealed before transport. Laundry should be placed directly in the machines from the plastic bags so as not to infect laundry room tables, floor, etc.
 - iv. The PMP may advise the tenant (and BHA) of the tenant's necessity to dispose of infested furnishings. It is the tenant's responsibility to wrap and seal any such items in a protective cover to prevent bugs and eggs from falling

off during transport and disposal. The tenant must notify the BHA of all items that are to be disposed. All items must be labeled "Infested with Bedbugs". The BHA will notify the town of items requiring pickup and will accordingly advise the tenant when such items can be brought to the street curb, by the tenant, for disposal pickup. The tenant is not to remove or dispose of any item(s) in any other manner. The tenant is to ensure that all vacuumed refuse and vacuum bags from the infested rooms are disposed of curbside in sealed plastic bags;

- v. Upon notification, by the PMP, of the completed treatment plan, the BHA will notify the Billerica Board of Health, as well as the tenant(s) in units infested, and tenants in surrounding/adjacent units. Until the PMP has declared the infestation eliminated, maintenance personnel (both in-house and outside contractors) will be restricted from entering infested units except for life threatening emergencies.
7. Failure to comply with the recommendations of the PMP or this policy, shall be deemed a violation of appropriate sections of the tenant's lease. The BHA will actively process any violation subjecting the tenant to appropriate action(s), including lease termination.