

COMING CLEAN ABOUT BED BUGS THE FACTS ABOUT BED BUG PREVENTION AND TREATMENT

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Sleep tight and don't let the bed bugs bite, the old saying goes. Many people think of bed bugs as fictional nighttime visitors, but the fact is, these nocturnal pests are becoming a real problem. Infestations are common, especially in hospitality settings, and when they occur they evoke – right or wrong – the impression that infested hotels are unsanitary and of low quality. While research does not currently indicate a serious health risk associated with bed bugs, the appearance of these pests threaten the health of a business' reputation. To ensure that your brand doesn't get put through the wringer, put these prevention strategies to work.

TAKE IT TO THE MATTRESSES

Hotel rooms give bed bugs the perfect combination of a reliable food source and convenient harborage in mattresses, box springs, behind wooden headboards, in couch cushions and other furniture.

Bed bugs typically hide during the daytime, so it's difficult to spot them. Instead, look for small, rust-colored stains they leave behind. When changing the sheets, pay careful attention to signs of bed bug presence on mattress edges, tags and seams, as well as on box springs.

An inexpensive synthetic covering on mattresses and especially box springs prevents bed bugs from reaching the fibrous interior or hiding along edges or under tags. For pests that have already found



harborage, the encasement prevents their escape.

Periodically, perform a more extensive inspection of the room. While bed bugs are often discovered in the bed, they can hide behind headboards, under seat cushions, in electrical outlets, behind pictures or beneath buckled carpet.

Because so few people react visibly to initial bed bug bites, the presence of noticeable bite reactions – or the lack thereof – may not be a reliable early indicator of bed bug presence. Without regular monitoring practices, bed bugs may go undetected for a longer period of time.

PREVENT A "BED SPREAD"

Once you detect bed bugs in the room, take the following steps.

- Report – Alert management immediately to ensure that a pest management professional is con-

tacted as soon as possible.

- Quarantine – Take the room out of service until it has been inspected and treated. If guests must be moved, pre-treat the new room.
- Launder – For items that can be laundered, wash in hot water with detergent and dry in a dryer. The combination of heat and soap will kill bed bugs and remove any eggs.
- Dispose – If furniture or other items harboring bed bugs can be disposed of, it increases the chances of a successful eradication.

Bed bug infestations can be difficult to remedy. Work with your pest management provider to develop a monitoring strategy so that, when it all comes out in the wash, your reputation remains spotless.