

Bed Bug Policy and Procedures

Purpose

The University of the South is committed to a timely and effective response to bed bugs. A coordinated effort between University departments will provide education, communication, investigation, guidance, and ongoing support. This policy provides information and protocols to deal with bed bug incidents.

Scope

This policy relates only to University facilities and contains basic information (including myths), response, procedures for residence halls, procedures for public spaces, and treatments. Included is also guidance for travelers on prevention.

Definitions (Facts & Myths)

FACTS

- Bed bugs thrive in areas with high occupancy such as hotels, apartment complexes, and other residential facilities.
- Bed bugs often go undetected until they become a major infestation and have already been transported to new locations.
- Anyone can unknowingly pick up bed bugs from a location they presently exist – an apartment, other residence hall rooms, movie theaters, hotels, motels, etc. They can also harbor in secondhand furniture. Bed bugs are equal opportunity pests – they will infest anyone, anywhere, and are not a result of poor hygiene or uncleanliness.
- Bed bugs are small nocturnal insects that live by feeding on the blood of humans and other warm blooded hosts. The adult bed bug is ¼ inch long, ⅛ inch wide (about the size of the apple seed) and reddish brown. It is flattened from top to bottom, with an oval body that is well adapted for hiding in narrow crevices. The body may become greatly enlarged and blood-red during a blood meal, but it subsequently turns a dirty brown.
- Bed bugs lack wings and cannot fly, but they are very mobile. They typically walk undetected across human skin.
- Bed bugs are generally active at night or dawn, with a peak feeding period approximately an hour before sunrise. And although bed bugs tend to be more active at night, they can bite at any time.
- After feeding for five to fifteen minutes, the bug returns to its hiding place. Bites consist of a raised red bump or flat welt, and are often accompanied by intense itching. The red bump or flat welts are the result of an allergic reaction to the anesthetic contained in the bed bug saliva, which is inserted into the blood of the host. Bed bug bites may appear indistinguishable from mosquito bites, although they tend to last for longer periods. Bites may not become immediately visible and can take up to 9 days to appear. Bites may sometimes be aligned three in a row.
- Some people are not affected by bed bugs, may not have a reaction to bed bug bites and may be unaware that bed bugs are in their home until they actually see them.
- There have been no known cases of bed bugs passing disease from host to host. Extensive testing has been performed in laboratory settings, which confirms these findings. Therefore, bed bugs are less dangerous than more common insects such as the flea.
- To move from egg through adult and egg again under ideal conditions (75-80% relative humidity, 83-90 degrees F), it may take four to five weeks. Adults can live several months and nymphs for three months without feeding. Under typical conditions with a host (food supply), a bed bug may be able to live more than 300 days.

- Insect foggers provide very little control of bed bugs and may even cause the bed bug population to disperse, making control more difficult. Insect foggers are dangerous in that they can leave unwanted residue throughout the treated area, as well as contain a flammable propellant and some have been associated with a number of fires.

MYTHS

- **Only dirty, cluttered homes get bed bugs.** Anyone can get bed bugs. Bed bugs have been found in the homes of the wealthy and poor. Unsanitary conditions will not cause bed bugs but getting rid of clutter will help to reduce the number of places bed bugs can live and hide.
- **Bed bugs cannot be seen with the naked eye.** Bed bugs are small but can be seen with the naked eye. A magnifying glass will help. Young bed bugs are about the size of a poppy seed and mature ones are about the size of an apple seed.
- **If I see bite marks, I have bed bugs.** Other insect bites may resemble that of bed bugs. Presence of live bed bugs or their eggs will confirm their infestation in an area.
- **If I have bed bugs I need to get rid of infested clothing and furniture.** Clothing can be laundered to get rid of bed bugs. In most cases furniture can be treated and should only be discarded if there are no acceptable treatments that can rid them of bed bugs.
- **Bed bugs are only found on the bed.** Although they are called bed bugs they are not only confined to the bed. Bed bugs are commonly found in beds, on sofas, in chairs and areas near where people sleep or lounge.
- **Bed bug inspections need scent detecting dogs to really tell where bed bugs are.** Bed bug scent dogs can be helpful, but are rarely necessary.
- **Encasing a mattress and box spring will prevent future bed bug infestations in your home.** Encasements will help prevent a mattress or box spring from becoming infested or being a reservoir for bed bugs, but bed bugs can still find their way onto a bed to bite. And if bed bugs cannot live in a mattress or box springs, they will live somewhere else. Encasements are a good tool, but are not sufficient to prevent or treat an infestation.

Policies, Procedures & Responsibilities

What should I do if I believe I have bed bugs?

1) Report concerns immediately, as soon as possible.

Reports should be made to either:

Resident Students: Residential Life Office

Call (931) 598-1446 on Monday–Friday from 8:00 a.m.–4:30 p.m.

After Hours and weekends, call (931) 636-8181.

Summer Conference Guests:

Conference Services Office

Call (931) 598-1337 on Monday–Friday from 8:00 a.m.–4:30 p.m.

2) Prepared to communicate.

Staff should be prepared to notify building, room and/or location residents (if appropriate)

3) Gather or retain evidence.

Keep any bug(s) found (intact if possible) to show Facilities Management and/or a certified pest control technician.

4) Initiate treatment.

Be prepared to follow the written instructions for “treatment protocol” to the letter and in a timely manner (within 24 hours). A licensed pest control technician will work with residents and staff to provide the best possible treatment protocol. Several treatments may be necessary to ensure complete eradication.

What should I NOT do if I believe I have bed bugs?

- Do NOT panic. Although bed bugs can be annoying, they are not dangerous and can be battled safely and successfully by following all protocols given.
- Do NOT wait until after 4pm on a Friday to notify someone. Contact the appropriate office (numbers provided above) as soon as you suspect a problem.
- Do NOT apply pesticides on your own. This can actually worsen the problem. Facilities Management has a licensed pest control contractor that will come to campus and confirm the infestation and to develop a treatment protocol
- Do NOT move mattresses or any other furniture. Infested furniture can be cleaned and treated. Placing infested furniture (particularly mattresses) into common areas or on the street can also help spread bed bugs into other rooms.
- Do NOT make plans to sleep in a friend's room or at off-campus residences. If there are bed bugs present, this may spread them to other buildings/rooms.

Procedures for Residence Halls

The Office of Residential Life will provide a link on their website to the Bed Bug Policy, which includes information about bed bugs. At the mandatory Residence Hall Meeting each academic term, Proctors will review the basic information of the Bed Bug Policy so students understand what to do and not do, if they believe they have bed bugs.

For the comfort and wellbeing of all residents, the University will adhere to the following guidelines:

Staff response: In the event of suspected bed bugs, Residential Life or Conference Services staff arriving on the scene shall:

- Ask the resident if they have any visible bites or scars
- If an enrolled student, Residential Life will encourage the student to seek appropriate medical care for bug bites at the Wellness Center, or a medical care facility of the student's choosing
- If a summer conference resident, Conference Services will provide affected resident with a list of local health/medical clinics
 - Inform the resident that Facilities Management will be called and will be present in their room as soon as possible to do an assessment (NOTE: only the certified pest control technician can confirm bed bugs)
- Call Facilities Management to generate a work order request and dispatch a certified pest control technician
- Notify the Office of Residential Life or Conference Services Manager
- Arrange to have an Area Coordinator, Proctor, or Conference Services staff let Facilities Management and/or the certified pest control technician into the affected room.

When the certified pest control technician arrives:

- He/she will inspect the area. A thorough inspection of the living space will include, but not be limited to, the mattress, bed frame, closet, desk, clothing and any luggage. It is best if a resident of the room or suite be present, though in every situation that a pest control technician is in the room, a member of the Residential Life or Conference Services staff may also be present. This investigation may require several hours as bed bugs are difficult to locate. If an infestation of bed bugs is not found, the area may be treated for any other pest problems that are identified.
- If a space is confirmed to have bed bugs, he/she will treat all spaces and may treat adjacent spaces, if needed. He/she will make a plan to return to check the status of the room.
- If a space is confirmed to NOT have bed bugs, he/she will, as a precaution, put in place a bed bug monitoring system for follow-up. The residents will be asked to continue observing their living space, and to notify Residential Life or Conference Services immediately if there are further problems.

Upon completion of the assessment, the Residential Life or Conference Services staff member onsite should:

- Communicate with the exterminator to hear of the final status.
- Find and offer a temporary space for resident(s) affected, if the space tests positive for bed bugs.
- Instruct the resident to dry, wash, and dry again any clothes, bedding, and anything they will take with them to a temporary housing assignment (they should not go to another space until this has been done). (NOTE: The University does not reimburse for any cleaning)

Treatment: The affected residents(s) should follow instructions in the *Treatment Protocols* including bagging all belongings to be treated.

Facilities Management shall:

- Submit a Work Order Request immediately.
- Contact the certified pest control technician and bring them to campus (If the call is after normal working hours or weekends the exterminator will be contacted the next business day)
- Remove old mattress(es) and have new mattress(es) brought to the room immediately following the conclusion of the treatment protocol.

The Director or Associate Director/Conference Services Manager shall:

- Ensure that the Residential Life/Conference Services staff and affected residents follow all protocols identified herein.

Procedures for Public Spaces

For the safety and comfort of all faculty, staff, students, and guests utilizing university facilities, the university will adhere to the following guidelines:

- Any employee who suspects the presence of bed bugs in any area on campus, such as a classroom, office, or public space should contact **Facilities Management** immediately
- Employees should provide thorough and detailed information regarding location and evidence of the pests. Keep any bug(s) found (intact if possible) to show Facilities Management and/or a certified pest control technician.
- Facilities Management will make a thorough examination of the space in question initiate a detailed work order, and will contact a certified pest control technician. Response times may vary, but should be within an hour during business hours. If the call is after business hours, or on weekends, the certified pest control technician will be contacted the next business day. Upon their arrival, they will evaluate initial findings and provide services as needed.
- Office residents who report suspected bed bugs will NOT be granted an immediate temporary change in offices until after a certified pest control technician has inspected the room and documented his/her findings.
- Faculty and staff may not, at any time, deny Facilities Management staff or the certified pest control technician access to offices, classrooms or other public spaces when responding to a call regarding bed bugs.
- Faculty and staff will be encouraged to visit their family physician for an examination of any bites that may have occurred and prevention of a secondary infection.
- When a certified pest control technician arrives:
 - He/she will inspect the area. A thorough inspection of the space will include, but not be limited to, the mattress, bed frame, closet, desk, clothing and any luggage. It is best if a resident of the room or suite be present. This investigation may require several hours as bed bugs are difficult to locate. If an infestation of bed bugs is not found, the area may be treated for any other pest problems that are identified.
 - If a space is confirmed to have bed bugs, he/she will treat all spaces and may treat adjacent spaces, if needed. He/she will make a plan to return to check the status of the room.
 - If a space is confirmed to NOT have bed bugs, he/she will, as a precaution, put in place a bed bug monitoring system for follow-up. The occupants will be asked to continue

observing the space, and to Facilities Management immediately if there are further problems.

- Upon completion of the assessment, Facilities Management should:
 - Communicate with the exterminator to hear of the final status.
 - Find and offer a temporary space for occupant(s) affected, if the space tests positive for bed bugs.
 - Instruct the occupant to dry, wash, and dry again any clothes, bedding, and anything they will take with them to a temporary office assignment (they should not go to another space until this has been done). (NOTE: The University does not reimburse for any cleaning)
- The affected residents(s) should follow instructions in the *Treatment Protocols* including bagging all belongings to be treated.
- After the treatment protocol occurs, have any mattresses from the room replaced. Mattresses should be placed in a bag (provided by Facilities Management), sealed, and placed near outdoor trash enclosure/dumpster.

All efforts will be made to coordinate the necessary treatment of affected spaces as quickly and as effectively as possible. However, any space designated to have bed bugs and possibly surrounding spaces, is eligible for closing as determined necessary by Facilities Management, until the treatment has occurred and the space has been cleared by a certified pest control technician.

Prevention

When traveling, what can I do to reduce the risk of bed bugs?

- First, look at the room you are staying in to seek potential hiding places for bed bugs, such as carpet edges, mattress seams, pillow linings, head boards, wall trim or other tiny crack like places bed bugs might hide.
- Next, look specifically at the mattress seams for signs of bed bug activity: droppings, casings, eggs, bloodstains, or even bed bugs themselves – hiding in a tiny fold and seam lines.
- Never leave clothing lying on the bed, floor or in any other location of possible infestation. Instead, use hangers or hooks capable of keeping all cloth distant from the floor or bed. It's also a good idea to elevate suitcases off the floor on a luggage stand, tabletop or other hard surface.
- Close suitcases or travel bags when not in use.
- When returning from any travel (especially abroad), it is a good idea to take suitcases to a laundromat and wash ALL items before taking the suitcase into the home, residence hall, apartment, etc.
- Washing and drying clothes at 120 degrees F will kill any bed bugs or eggs before they are brought inside. Suitcases should be sealed in plastic bags.

Bed Bug Treatment Protocols

Areas will need to be vacated for a minimum of 4 hours after treatment. Please help make the treatment effective by specifically following protocols.

Floor:

- All items should be removed from the floor.
- Remove shoes and other items from the floor.
- Remove everything from under the bed.

Walls:

- Move all items 2-3 feet from the walls.
- Take all pictures off of the walls.
- Remove all wall outlets covers. (Facilities Management)

Infested items:

- Place heavily infested items to be disposed of in plastic bags (provided by Facilities Management) before removing them from the room.
- Bag all infested items that need to be washed in hot water and/or dry on hot setting. Bag items after these have been laundered.
- Discard all cardboard hangers, cardboard boxes or other container that may harbor bedbugs.

Furniture:

- Empty all drawers, wardrobes and etc.
- Move all heavily infested furniture.

Electronic devices:

- Unplug computers, TV's and etc.

Effective Date/Approved Date

Facilities Management is primarily responsible for this policy in partnership with Residential Life and Conference Services. The policy is effective June 6, 2017.