

Bed Bugs In the Firehouse

What you should know to prevent infestations

Resurgence

- Re-emerged within the past decade; in 2010 every major metropolis reported infestations:
 - Increased resistance to available pesticides
 - Greater international and domestic travel
 - Lack of knowledge how to control after 50 year absence

What do they look like?

- Adults
 - Brown to reddish brown
 - Flattened oval shaped
 - Non-functional wing pads
 - Beaklike piercing-sucking mouth
 - 3/16 to 1/5 in. long



Courtesy OSU Extension

What do they look like?



- Nymphs
 - Colorless when newly hatched
 - Turn brown as mature
 - Look similar to adult
- Eggs
 - White
 - 1/32 in. long

Where do they hang out?

- Senior housing
- Nursing homes
- Apartment buildings
- Hotels
- Schools
- Stores
- Private homes
- Offices
- Churches
- Movie theaters
- College dorms
- Firehouses

Where do they hang out?



- Dark, protected sites
 - Mattress seams and folds
 - Upholstery and drapes
 - Tack board of carpet
 - Window and door frames, baseboards
 - Electrical boxes
 - Cracks in walls

How do they feed?

- Feed mostly at night when host is asleep
- Blood-feeder; injects host with sharp beak
- Feeds from 10-15 minutes
- Hides to digest meal



What signs are displayed by the host?

- Small, hard, white welts which can become irritated and inflamed
- Welts typically in clusters
- Itching for several hours to several days



What are the environmental signs?



- Dark spots (excrement) on sheets, mattresses, bedclothes and walls
- Fecal spots, eggshells and shed skins in hiding places
- Sweet, musty odor in severe infestations

How do they spread?

- Bed bugs are great travelers, they hitchhike rides in:
 - Handbags
 - Fold of clothes
 - Luggage
 - Planes, trains, cars and even ambulances



Avoid Picking Up On The Run

- If appropriate, wear shoe covers when entering a potentially infested place
 - Dispose after use by placing them in a sealed plastic bag and throwing them away
- If shoe covers not appropriate, inspect shoes before returning to the firehouse
 - Store footwear in a sealed plastic bag and place in dryer for 15 min. (check with manufacturer)
- Tuck pants legs into socks or footwear

Avoid Picking Up On The Run

- Store bunker gear and uniform in a sealed plastic bag after entering a potentially infested place
- Do not take plastic bags containing suspected bug infested clothing into living quarters
- Clean bunker gear according to manufacturer's instructions; wash and dry uniform items

Other Avoidance Tips

- Use care when bringing used furniture, clothing or bedding into the firehouse
 - Inspect used furniture for bed bugs and eggs
 - Place new and used clothing and linens into sealed bags until they can be washed and dried.

Other Avoidance Tips

- Caulk cracks in the building exterior
- Repair or screen openings to exclude birds, bats, and rodents that can serve as alternate hosts.

Eradication

- Typically involves multiple treatments by a licensed pest control operator
- Possible disposal of infested mattresses and furniture
- Daily vacuuming; encasing mattresses and fabric items



Conclusion

The best defense against bed bugs is education and awareness. Once a firehouse or any building becomes infested, eradication is time consuming and complex.

Resources

- www.centralohiobedbugs.org
- The Ohio State University Extension FactSheet HYG-2105-04
- www.Forbes.com/2010/12/22/worst-cities-bed-bugs
- www.badbedbugs.com
- www.orkin.com
- Ohio Dept of Health – Ohio Bed Bug Workgroup Final Report and Recommendations to the Governor and Ohio General Assembly