

Bed Bugs/Pest Social Service and Legal Resources

It is very common to experience bed bugs/pests, regardless of how clean you and your family keep your home. Do not be embarrassed by the presence of pests/bed bugs in your unit. This is a common problem. It is important to take action. There are resources available to assist you; these are listed at the end of this resource should you have any additional questions. Please be in touch with the help in your community.

1) Where to look for pests/bedbugs

a) On your mattress

Check the seams of your mattress and couch for markings, eggs, or bugs. Small brown dots on your sheets, mattress creases, or mattress tags. These dots may be droppings from the bed bugs or blood from their feeding.



b) On your bed frame

Check the frame for brown markings, bed bugs, and their eggs. The brown markings are droppings. You may see these close to cracks in the frame, for example: where the slats are under your mattress or where the frame comes together in certain places.



c) On your skin

If there are bed bugs in your unit, you may be noticing bites on your skin from their feedings. Not everyone reacts to bed bug bites, so it is important to do a thorough inspection of your unit.



If you find markings of bed bugs, take photos and proceed to the next step of notifying your landlord. If you are unsure as to whether or not you have an infestation, you may wish to contact a community support to discuss the possibility of arranging your own inspection.

2) Notifying the Landlord

When?

It is important that you notify your landlord about the pests as soon as possible. The faster the treatment happens, the more likely that the issue will be resolved by the treatment.

How?

In Writing

Ideally, you will be able to notify your landlord in writing of the presence of bed bugs in your unit. We have made a form letter for people to use to notify their landlord of the presence of bedbugs in their unit. Please see the attached document for a form letter to notify your landlord that there are bedbugs in your unit.

Bed Bugs/Pest Social Service and Legal Resources

2) Notifying the Landlord (continued)

Why?

This will help you in the event that you need to prove this at the Landlord and Tenant Board. When you provide them with a letter, be sure to keep a copy of it for your own records.

When you write a letter to your landlord, it can confirm the following details:

- 1) The date that you became aware of the presence of bed bugs
- 2) The date they were notified of the presence of bed bugs
- 3) How long it has been going on for
- 4) The nature of the problem
- 5) The extent of the infestation (i.e. how many rooms are affected)
- 6) Includes any photos that have been taken of the infestation
- 7) Confirms that you had notified them of the presence of pests in your unit

What to expect from your landlord:

Once you have notified the landlord, they must respond by law under the *Residential Tenancies Act*. In the form letter, you will be asking for a written response. Their response should detail the steps they intend to take to eliminate the pests in your unit. There may be steps that they need you to take to help with the elimination of the bed bugs. By law, there are responsibilities that the tenant and landlord must take to eliminate the infestation.

Ending the Lease:

Sometimes it is thought that if a unit had bedbugs or other pests then the tenant can automatically break their lease or stop paying their rent. **This is not the case.**

3) Responsibilities: Landlord and Tenant

Landlord Responsibilities

- Make a "reasonable effort" to eliminate the pests
 - * Arrange for the extermination services
 - * Pay for the extermination services
- Give 24 hours notice before entering the unit (for inspection or treatments)

Tenant Responsibilities

- Co-operating with the landlord's efforts to control the pests
- Preparing the unit for the treatments, as per the instructions given by the landlord, which could include:
 - * Clearing out shelves
 - * Vacuuming
 - * Laundering clothing and bedding
 - * Moving furniture away from the walls
 - * Removing clutter

Bed Bugs/Pest Social Service and Legal Resources

4) My landlord plans to spray for bed bugs...

- The landlord will arrange to have an extermination service come to inspect the unit
- Typically, treatments for bed bugs are done twice. The second treatment is done approximately 2 weeks after the first. If the landlord does not plan to spray twice, they should make arrangements for a second inspection.
- When the unit is sprayed, you may need to vacate the unit for 5-6 hours, depending on the strength of the chemicals being used. If there is a pregnancy, a child under 2 years of age, or respiratory issues or allergic sensitivities, it is recommended to vacate the unit for 24 hours. It is important to make arrangements to be out of the unit for the appropriate amount of time. The

5) The bedbug treatments were ineffective

It may be that the treatment was ineffective and the bed bugs have not gone away since the treatment. You may want to seek out additional help at this time.

There may be circumstances where you are served with an eviction notice. This is called an N-5 form. There may be additional steps that can be taken to maintain your housing. It may be in your best interest to contact the legal services listed below as soon as possible.

If you have questions about your situation, the following agencies may be of assistance:

Tenant Advocacy Services

1) Housing Help

309 Cooper St.
Suite 502
Ottawa, ON, K2P 0G5
Phone: 613-563-4532

2) Action Logement

261 Montreal Rd.
Suite 200
Ottawa, ON, K1L 8C7
Phone: 613-562-8219

Legal Services

3) University of Ottawa Legal Clinic

17 Copernicus St.
Ottawa, ON
Phone: (613) 562-5600

4) Community Legal Clinics

West End Legal Services
1301 Richmond Rd.
Ottawa, ON
Phone: 613-596-1641

Community Legal Services
1 Nicholas Street
Suite 422
Ottawa, ON
Phone: 613-241-7008

South Ottawa Community Legal Services

1355 Bank St.
Suite 406
Ottawa, ON
Phone: 613-733-0140

Clinique Juridique Francophone de L'Est d'Ottawa

290 Rue Dupuis
Vanier, ON
Phone: 613-744-2892

(Today's date: Month 00, 2000)

(Landlord's Name)

(Landlord's Address Line 1)

(Address Line 2)

(City, Province)

(Postal Code)

Re: Bed Bugs in (Your Address)

Dear (Landlord's Name),

This letter is to advise you that on (Month 00, 2000), while inspecting my (mattress, bed frame, electrical outlets) in (my bedroom, the bedroom of my children, all bedrooms, entire unit) I noticed that there are (bed bug droppings, blood on sheets, bites on your arms). This is because there are bed bugs being in my unit. This has been an ongoing issue since (date above) and I am notifying you today, (Today's date, Month 00, 2000). I am concerned that these pests are causing a disruption in my enjoyment of my unit.

I trust that you will take the necessary steps to address this maintenance issue. Please inform me in writing as to how you intend to address this issue.

Thank you very much for your immediate attention to this concern.

Regards,

(Your name)

(Your Address Line 1)

(Address Line 2)

(City, Province)

(Postal Code)

Phone: (Your current phone number)