



# Residential, Structural & Community Pests

Department of Entomology • NC Cooperative Extension

## PREPARING YOUR HOME FOR BED BUG TREATMENT

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Bed bugs can be difficult to control when they infest your home unless you do your part by cooperating with the pest control company. The following tips will help your pest management company and YOU get rid of bed bugs quickly:

- \_\_\_ Don't move any of your belongings to another home during or before the treatment unless you know they are not infested. You might spread bed bugs to another home or to your car or workplace in a backpack or box and then re-infest your home after it has been treated. Move as few items as possible and have them checked for bed bugs (or heat them) before removing them.
- \_\_\_ Wash all sheets, blankets, pillowcases, and other bedding in hot water. Place the items in a dryer set on the highest setting that won't damage the items. Dry the items thoroughly and then place them in trash bags. Keep them separate from items that may be infested.
- \_\_\_ Wash all clothing in hot water and then dry on the highest setting allowed for the clothing. Clothing that can't be laundered and dried (including coats and jackets) can be dry-cleaned or need to be inspected carefully. Do not place clothing in infested rooms/areas until treatment has been completed and the bed bugs have been eliminated.
- \_\_\_ Place curtains, pillows, towels, stuffed animals, etc. in the dryer set on the highest setting that won't damage the items for at least 30 minutes. Double bag these items immediately after drying.
- \_\_\_ Carefully inspect all items that cannot be washed: books, electronics, picture frames, plastic toys, etc. If insecticides are going to be used, place children's toys into plastic bags or storage bins (only if they are bed bug free). If heat is used, the pest control company may want these items left in place so they are exposed to the heat treatment.
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- \_\_\_ Vacuum and wash all floors. To prevent bed bugs from escaping, be sure to place the vacuum bag into a plastic bag before disposing of it.
- \_\_\_ Vacuum the mattress and box spring to remove live/dead bed bugs. Double-bag and discard the vacuum bags in an outdoor trashcan immediately to avoid re-introducing or spreading any bed bugs caught in the vacuum. If the mattress and box spring will be encased, be sure to use one that is bed bug proof. These encasements are thick enough so that bed bugs cannot bite through it and have tight zippers that the bugs cannot escape through.
- \_\_\_ Vacuum couches, chairs and recliners thoroughly before treatment. Bed bugs are often found in couches and upholstered chairs. If possible, turn the furniture over or on its side/back and vacuum underneath as well. If there is a dust cover attached on the underside, pull it back and vacuum areas that will need to be treated. Double-bag and discard the vacuum bags in an outdoor trashcan immediately to avoid re-introducing or spreading any bed bugs caught in the vacuum.
- \_\_\_ A cluttered home is difficult to inspect and more difficult to treat because bed bugs can find many hiding places. Throw away unneeded items. Pick up and double bag all loose items in bedrooms (e.g., in the bottom of a closet) and other rooms that will be treated. Make sure that these items are treated (if needed) or inspected before returning these items to make sure you are not also returning bed bugs to the treated room(s).
- \_\_\_ Provide access to walls, closets, and areas around furniture to allow for a thorough inspection and treatment.

For additional information, also see:

*Bed Bugs – Insect Note – ENT/rsc-31*

*Tips For Preventing the Spread of Bed Bugs - Insect Note - ENT/rsc-39*

Information is also available on the web at: <http://insects.ncsu.edu/Urban/biting.htm>

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