

Bed Bugs

(cimex lectularis)

in Non-Residential Workplaces



Presented by Bill Kirchner ACE – Associate Certified
Entomologist
President - Cleveland Chemical Pest Control

Scope of this presentation

- This presentation will address the problems of bed bugs in non-residential environments and present some strategies & protocols to resolve bed bugs being found at work.

Scope of this presentation

- Basic bed bug Information – Facts vs. Myths.
- “Infestation vs. “Introduction” in workplace.
- Recommended Reporting Protocols
- Management Concerns:
 - Social
 - Political
 - Legal

**What happens when people hear
about a bed bug at work??**

PANIC!!

This presentation will explain why there is
NO REASON to **PANIC** when you find a bed
bug at work!

Bed bug Facts



- Bed bugs don't fly, and cannot jump.
- Bed bugs crawl fast.
- Bed bugs are nocturnal insects, except in buildings where CO2 levels are high during the day.
- Bed bugs need a blood meal for development, most often feed on a sleeper's exposed skin, and are not known to transmit disease.

What is a non-residential work setting?

- Anywhere someone works but doesn't sleep.
 - Offices
 - Schools (Non-Daycare)
 - Medical Buildings
 - Stores
 - Factories

Why is this important for bed bugs in the work area?

- Bed bugs are hitchhikers. The four main ways they can get introduced to a work area are:
 - Employees, clothing, purses, briefcases, backpacks, etc.
 - Customers/Visitors
 - Contractors/Vendors/Delivery persons
 - Furniture (especially stuffed or used).

Why is this important for bed bugs in the work area? (continued)

- Bed bugs need areas where the hosts are available, inactive (sleeping), unaware, and in the dark.
- Bed bugs CANNOT propagate without REGULAR Feedings (blood meal).
- Offices are busy bustling places that are inhospitable to bed bugs.

What is the difference between “Infestation” / “Introduction”

- In the pest management industry we use the word “introduction” rather than infestation when dealing with them in an office environment, why, because when they are brought in there is usually, only 1 - 3 bed bugs involved. That is hardly an infestation!!! In any area that has not had a problem with bed bugs it should always be considered an “introduction”

What is the difference between “Infestation” / “Introduction”

- Office management and staff often define the word “infestation” differently from pest management professionals.
- Infestation implies widespread population reproducing and growing.

What is the difference between “Infestation” / “Introduction”

- So, if someone brings in 1 bed bug and it is caught, the problem has been taken care of, with the question that needs to be answered is how it got there so no more “introductions” happen.
- If 2-3 are brought in, bed bugs will be active during the day and should be easily seen and caught.

Office bed bug sightings presents a host of unusual issues

- *Bed bugs in an office pose very sensitive legal, ethical, and human relation issues that can be flashpoints for conflict.*

Examples include the following:

- People's perceptions that the workplace is unhealthy, because of the risk of bed bug bites, allergic reactions, or perceived health risks from insecticide treatments

Office bed bug sightings presents a host of unusual issues (continued)

- People's anxiety about taking bed bugs home.
- Confidentiality concerns about other employees finding out that an employee has bed bugs at home and may bring them into work.
- Legal implications of an employee being blamed (rightly or wrongly) for bringing them to work.

Office bed bug sightings presents a host of unusual issues (continued)

- Legal implications of an employer being blamed (rightly or wrongly) for the introduction to homes from bed bugs at work.
- If these issues are not handled well they can quickly degrade into work actions (including workers compensation claims), union disputes, complaints to the health department, and even lawsuits.

Recommended Reporting Protocols

- There should be a staff member responsible to respond to anyone finding a bed bug at work.
- This person should be trained to at least be able to tell the difference between a bed bug and another insect.
- Try to keep the insect intact, do not smash or tape to paper, put in container.

Recommended Reporting Protocols (continued)

- Write down name and area found.
- Depending on protocols, notify HR, legal, management, etc., to determine how they are getting in the building.
- Call your pest management professional. Have them confirm species, age and sex of bed bug. Follow their recommendations.

Recommended Reporting Protocols (continued)

- Keep an eye out for any others that may have been brought in.
- Determine scope and intensity of service needed, i.e. canine inspection, monitoring, spot treatment, employee home treatment, etc.
- Ongoing monitoring: After incident, how will the office be monitored to detect new introductions and for how long?

Major Decisions to Property Managers & Business Owners

- **Disclosure and Education:**

Should information about the bed bug findings be disclosed to the office community?

If so, what specific information and how wide of an audience?

What methods should be used to educate the office community (fact sheets, seminars, websites, etc.)

Major Decisions to Property Managers & Business Owners

- Disclosure may lead to discrimination and unfair treatment of staff members whose workstations are involved. And there is always a risk of litigation.
- Disclosure is the most difficult decision facing the property manager and ultimately a human resources, and risk management decision.

Major Decisions to Property Managers & Business Owners

- Resources for Employee's Homes:

What assistance, if any, will be provided to the employees to deal with bed bugs at home?

Examples include education (through handouts, seminars, etc.), free or partially subsidized inspections or home treatments through a licensed pest management company, encasements, or interceptor devices.

Major Decisions to Property Managers & Business Owners

- Conversely, failure to disclose this problem sets the stage for control failure, constant reintroductions of bed bugs, and litigation from staff who are angry they were not warned about the introduction so they could take measures to avoid taking bed bugs home.

In closing

- The presence of bed bugs in the workplace is a politically sensitive subject and involves, facilities, human resources, public relations and risk management decisions that can have significant financial and legal implications.

In closing (continued)

- Management should be familiar with the myths and misconceptions associated with bed bugs along with the challenges of bed bug management, including the limitations associated with many of the control methods, particularly chemicals.

In closing (continued)

- A well educated client is better able to make the tough decisions required for bed bug introductions.
- And Remember:

Don't PANIC!

Questions?



Thank You!



Bill Kirchner ACE

President

Associate Certified Entomologist

Cleveland Chemical Pest Control – Division of CCPC Inc.

“Serving Greater Cleveland since 1903”

18400 S Waterloo Rd.

Cleveland, OH 44119-3227

216-481-8400

Sources for this presentation

- **Central Ohio Bed Bug Task force factsheets**
- **MGK - Bed Bugs in Office Buildings Special Report**
- <http://www.bedbug.org.au>