

Understanding Lakewood's Bed Bug Ordinance

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Lakewood Pre-Ordinance

- Bed bug complaints were on the rise
- 51% of Lakewood's housing structure's are rental properties
- The local ordinance did not specifically address bed bugs
- Conflicts between tenants and landlords were not easily resolved
- Community advocates wanted to find a solution to ensure healthy & safe housing

What's the Solution?

- The City of Lakewood and LakewoodAlive created a Bed Bug Taskforce
- Learned best practices and challenges from our partners at the Cuyahoga County Health Department
- Studied other cities ordinances and policies that deal with bed bugs
- Talked to responsible landlords and tenants and exterminators to learn what they were doing to address the issue effectively

What's the Solution?

- LakewoodAlive was identified as the City's agent and would run point on the program
- Mark McNamara became a certified commercial applicator
- City of Lakewood developed best practices and education materials to be shared with landlords and tenants

Lakewood's Ordinance

CHAPTER 1306.34 RESPONSIBILITY FOR PEST EXTERMINATION

(a) An owner of an occupiable structure shall take such measures necessary to prevent and control the harborage and free movement of insects, vermin, rodents or other pests within the structure. An owner of an occupiable structure is solely responsible for the extermination of insects, vermin, rodents or other pests within the structure. No owner shall fail to exterminate insects, vermin, rodents or other pests as required herein.

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(b) In the event that the dwelling is infested with or there is a report of infestation with bedbugs, the owner shall make written notification to all contiguous units (including adjacent units on either side, across the hall, or above or below the affected unit) within 72 hours of confirmation of the presence of bedbugs. In addition, where there are confirmed bedbugs in a dwelling unit within a building of more than three dwelling units, the owner or agent shall cause all affected units to be treated by a licensed pesticide applicator under Section 921.06 of the Revised Code or for the affected units to be heat-treated to eliminate the bedbugs.

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(c) The occupant of an occupiable structure, if not the owner, shall notify the owner of the structure when the occupant knows of or suspects an infestation of insects, vermin, rodents or other pests within the structure within 72 hours of discovery. The occupant shall grant the owner and the owner's agents or contractors access to every portion of the structure reasonably necessary for the inspection and extermination of insects, vermin, rodents or other pests within the structure. No occupant shall fail to promptly notify an owner or fail to grant the owner or the owner's agents or contractors reasonable access as required herein.

Key Takeaways

Property owner/landlord responsibilities:

Preventing and exterminating infestations of pests including bed bugs

Notifying contiguous units of a bed bug infestation in writing within 72 hours

Using a licensed pesticide applicator or heat treatment(s) if structure has 4 or more units

Key Takeaways

Tenant Responsibilities:

Notifying their landlord within 72 hours if they suspect or know of an infestation

Granting the owner, owner's agent or contractors reasonable access to the property

Complaint Process

- Complaint received
- Contact the resident
- Verify BB either by inspection, previous inspection/treatment by exterminator, sample collected by resident
- Contact owner/landlord/management company to advise of finding of live bed bugs and the need to provide for extermination & notification

Complaint Process

- Verify treatment by obtaining service report from exterminator
- Follow up with parties and troubleshoot at any issues in the process
- In the case of a school referral, notify the school district that the residence has been exterminated.
- Close out case if compliant or refer to city building department if not compliant

Referral Sources

Homeowner – seeking help with the cost, information, or referral to an exterminator

Landlord/owner – Possibly looking for resources to address the issue or concerns about tenant cooperation

Tenant – concerned about how to address the issue with the property owner (worried about eviction)

School District – student evidences bed bugs on their person

Referral Sources

Refuse Department – furniture on tree lawn that might possibly harbor bed bugs

Lakewood Division of Aging

Senior Transportation

Exterminator - Concerned about an unaddressed infestation

Thank you & Questions

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