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## **Bed Bugs: Getting out of bed and getting into your business**

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Bed bug infestations in commercial properties are serious business. Any kind of pest can disrupt business, but bed bugs put commercial property owners at considerable financial and legal risk. Most municipalities in our area make landlords legally responsible for bed bug infestations. It pays to take care of this pest before anyone calls 311 - or a lawyer.

### Bed Bugs Aren't Just in Beds

Places people sleep, like homes, hospitals and hotels, remain the most common bed bug infestation sites, but commercial properties of all kinds are not immune. According to the joint University of Kentucky and National Pest Management Association 2015 Bugs without Borders survey, office buildings, retail stores, movie theaters, doctor's offices, restaurants and public transportation are increasingly likely to become infested with bed bugs.

### Bed Bugs Hurt Your Reputation and Your Bottom Line

A bed bug infestation hurts business. Bed bugs cause greater public alarm than other pests. For that reason, news of a bed bug infestation in a restaurant can be more devastating to your reputation than having roaches in the kitchen.

Treating a commercial property for bed bugs can be expensive if not caught early enough. Undetected, bed bugs can spread throughout your property and hide deep in walls, electrical sockets and carpets. Getting rid of a well-established bed bug infestation can be disruptive, costly and frustrating.

### Tips for Being Bed Bug Ready

Because people freely come and go in commercial properties, prevention is nearly impossible. Bed bugs have become endemic to the New York metro area. The reality is that your property is highly likely to have a bed bug problem sooner or later. Here are some tips for taking on the bed bugs in commercial environments:

- \* Educate yourself about recommended protocols for your type of property and the tenants you have. Offices require a different approach from restaurants, retail stores or storage facilities.
- \* Learn how bed bugs spread, what they look like, and how to inspect property, and share this knowledge with your staff.
- \* Install bed bug monitoring devices and check them regularly.
- \* Don't wait until a tenant or a tenant's customer or employee complains. Schedule regular inspections and consider bringing in a bed bug dog. Canines can cover a lot of ground fast and can find bed bugs that human inspectors might miss.
- \* Do not allow untrained employees use fogs or sprays to try and get rid of bed bugs. Such methods often spread the infestation. Treatment by unlicensed and uncertified personnel is illegal in all commercial properties.
- \* Keep records. If you ever are sued for bed bug issues, your inspection practices, pest

management plans and certifications by trained professionals can help you make your case.

### Fight Bed Bugs with Vigilance and a Fast Response

Vigilance is your first defense against bed bugs in commercial spaces. The sooner you identify an infestation, the lower the impact it will have. If you don't have a proactive approach, government inspectors may be at your door, with violation notices, orders to cure and other enforcement actions. If you, a tenant, customer or employee suspects a bed bug problem, get help fast.

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