

HELENA HOUSING AUTHORITY

BEDBUG POLICY

The Helena Housing Authority (referred to as “HHA”) recognizes the potential problems that can arise out of bedbug infestations in public housing. Accordingly, Helena Housing Authority adopts this policy in an effort to minimize bedbug infestations in its public housing.

HELENA HOUSING AUTHORITY’S RESPONSIBILITIES

A. Management

1. HHA shall provide training to appropriate staff members regarding the identification, prevention, and eradication of bedbugs.
2. HHA shall make efforts to educate new and existing residents on methods that may be utilized in order to prevent and detect bedbugs consistent with the Bedbug Prevention Action Plan included within the Prevention and Safe Removal of Bedbugs handout attached to this policy.
3. HHA may keep a qualified pest control company under contract to provide services “as needed” if HHA resident and staff efforts cannot adequately prevent or treat bedbug infestation.
4. HHA shall keep written records of reports and incidents of bedbug infestation. Said records shall identify the dates, times and places of such events.

B. Inspections

1. When a resident reports the existence of bedbugs in his or her unit, HHA shall within 24 hours make contact with the resident, provide the resident with information about control and prevention of bedbugs and discuss measures the resident may be able to take in the unit before an inspection is performed.
2. Following a report of bedbugs, HHA or a qualified third party trained in bedbug detection shall inspect the dwelling unit to determine if bedbugs are present. Inspections will be conducted by trained staff or third-party service providers. Low level infestations may escape visual detection. For this reason, multiple detection tools may be utilized. The inspections shall occur within three business days of the resident report, when possible.
3. The inspection shall cover the unit reporting the infestation and no less than the adjoining apartments or units consisting of the units above, below, and beside, and should be completed within three business day of a resident report of infestation, when possible.
4. If the initial inspection confirms the presence of bedbugs, HHA will contact a licensed pest control company to treat the infestation. The length, method and extent of the treatment will depend on the severity and complexity of the infestation, the recommendations of the pest control company, and the level of cooperation of the residents. Treatment should begin within five days of the inspection, though depending on the form of treatment and/or the availability of the contractor, this may not be possible. Treatment may take several weeks and possibly several applications.

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5. If an infestation is suspected but cannot be verified, HHA may re-inspect the unit(s) periodically over the next several months.
6. If licensed pest control services are unattainable within three calendar days, HHA shall retain documentation of the efforts to obtain qualified services.

C. Additional Considerations

1. Helena Housing Authority will not charge a resident to cover the cost of initial infestation bedbug treatment; such costs shall be covered by Helena Housing Authority. The only exception to this rule is that HHA may charge the resident for the replacement cost of materials supplied by HHA to the resident to combat bedbugs or the possibility of bedbugs when such materials are lost or damaged due to an action or omission of the resident or his or her guest.
2. Helena Housing Authority may charge a resident to cover the actual cost of subsequent re-infestation bedbug treatment(s) if it is determined that the re-infestation was caused by the resident's failure to comply with their standard lease agreement terms with respect to the condition of their unit and failure of compliance with the Bedbug Prevention Action Plan included within the Prevention and Safe Removal of Bedbugs handout attached to this policy.

RESIDENT RESPONSIBILITIES

1. Under the terms of Helena Housing Authority standard lease agreement, residents are required "To keep the dwelling unit and such other areas as may be assigned to the Resident for the Resident's exclusive use in a clean and safe condition." Accordingly, residents are required to report any suspected problems with bedbug infestation immediately. Residents are the first line of defense against bedbugs and should be encouraged to create living environments that deter bedbugs. Further, any willful failure on the part of a resident to report a bedbug infestation may result in adverse action taken against the resident, up to and including eviction. A resident reporting bedbugs may expect expeditious response and attention by Helena Housing Authority, but is advised that inspection and, if necessary, treatment of bedbugs may take time to schedule.
2. Clutter is a friend of bedbugs, because it gives the bugs a place to hide. Residents will reduce clutter by cleaning, picking up and organizing their personal belongings, and getting rid of personal items that are no longer used or needed.
3. Residents will maintain their units consistent with the Bedbug Prevention Action Plan included within the Prevention and Safe Removal of Bedbugs handout attached to this policy
4. To facilitate treatment of a unit, Helena Housing Authority will provide residents a minimum of 3 large plastic totes, 5 commercial size garbage bags, 1 small roll of duct tape, and \$10 in quarters for laundry costs.

5. Residents are required to cooperate with the treatment efforts by preparing their belongings and unit for treatment as outlined by the pest control company, allowing for heat treatment of furniture and refraining from placing infested furniture or other items in common areas such as hallways. In the event that these requirements are not followed, Helena Housing Authority may take adverse action against the resident, up to and including eviction. Residents will not be reimbursed the cost of any additional expense to the household, such as the purchase of new furniture, clothing, packing or cleaning services.

6. Residents can unintentionally bring bedbugs onto the property or into their unit when returning from a friend or family member's home, trip, or bringing used property into their units. Therefore, residents will check their luggage and clothes whenever they return from the above-mentioned examples and examine any secondhand items for bedbugs before bringing them home.

7. Residents are required to comply with the above-mentioned Resident Responsibility line items. In the event a resident refuses or fails to comply with said responsibilities, causing bedbug re-infestation to occur in their unit, Helena Housing Authority may take adverse action against the resident, up to and including eviction.

 Tenant

 Date

 Tenant

 Date

 Tenant
 11/14

 Date

Prevention and Safe Removal of Bedbugs

Bedbug infestations have become a serious problem in housing throughout the country. Public Housing properties are not immune to infestations, anyone or any home can get bedbugs. Bedbugs live on human and animal blood and typically hide and live in cracks and crevices in dark and undisturbed locations close to their hosts. They can live for long periods of time and although visible to the naked eye, they may be difficult to detect.

Bedbug Prevention Action Plan

- Inspect in and around sleeping and resting areas at home once a month.
- Look for signs of bedbug activity, active infestations will have fecal spotting, live or dead bedbugs, shed skins and bedbug eggs.
- Avoid used furniture and mattresses, especially discarded furniture and mattresses. Used furniture and refurbished mattresses may have bedbugs and bedbug eggs that are difficult to see.
- Inspect for the signs of bedbugs when traveling away from home. Look for live or dead bedbugs, shed bedbug skins or bedbug eggs and fecal spots on mattresses, clothing or dark cracks and crevices. Wood, metal or plastic furniture, sofas, chairs, tables and many other items may be infested with bedbugs.
- If contact with an active bedbug infestation is suspected away from home, segregate and isolate in sealed plastic bags any exposed luggage, clothing and personal effects until inspection and decontamination can be completed.
- Bedbugs prefer to live in cracks and crevices in areas like baseboards, moldings, window/door frames, and cracks/seams in walls and furniture, especially headboards and bed frames and screw holes.
- Encase mattresses and box springs. Seal box springs in an appropriate zippered encasement to prevent bedbugs hiding inside from escaping; this location is commonly affected in bedbug infestations and yet difficult to inspect.
- Thoroughly vacuum apartment, furniture and all belongings and use crevice tools and other attachments where feasible. Place the contents of the vacuum in a tightly sealed disposable bag and remove.

EARLY DETECTION IS CRITICAL Early identification and reporting of infestations by residents to building management and neighbors limits the spread of bedbugs. As soon as possible contact Helena Housing Authority. Report the suspected activity as soon as possible. The longer you wait the more likely the problem is to spread and the more difficult and costly it will be to control.

Bedbug Removal Action Plan

The following sequence of steps has been outlined by the Armed Forces Pest Management Board in order to facilitate control of bedbugs in housing. They are an example. We will follow the protocols outlined by our pest control company.

- Using a vacuum cleaner (preferably HEPA-filtered), remove the bugs and their cast skins from all observed and suspected harborage sites during the initial inspection, and periodically afterward (once weekly is a suggested self-help action). The vacuum bag should

be removed immediately afterward, sealed tightly inside a larger plastic bag, and that bag incinerated or placed in the next normal trash collection.

- Launder all infested cloth items in hot water, 120 degrees Fahrenheit or hotter for at least 10 minutes, with soap or detergent, then dry in a warm or hot dryer of at least 140 degrees for at least 20 minutes, or dry clean to kill all bedbug life stages present.
- Enclose each mattress and box spring in a sealed plastic cover, like those sold commercially. These types of encasements should be of high quality and bedbug puncture proof to limit exposure to house dust mites or bedbugs.
- Place and seal all recently laundered cloth items (*e.g.*, bed linens, clothing) inside new large plastic bags or tightly closed bins to prevent any bedbugs from re-infesting them.
- Seal shut all cracks, crevices, and entry points to wall voids, using a high-quality silicone-based sealant, especially within a 20 foot radius of any spot where bedbug bites have been reported, or where the bugs have actually been collected.
- Additional or alternative physical control measures against bedbugs may include: heat, cold, steam, physical mashing and sticky insect monitors.
- A residual insecticide should be applied, according to label directions, to each infested site and preferably to a small area around each site. Such applications often involve treating cracks and crevices. When planning and conducting any such treatments, consider examining, if not treating, the opposite side of any involved wall, floor or ceiling.
- Electrical outlet boxes, and similar voids that cannot be readily sealed, should be treated with an appropriately labeled insecticidal dust.
- Consider including some type of insect growth regulator (IGR) as a concurrent or adjunctive treatment (*e.g.*, as a tank mix).
- Limited use of an aerosol or ULV pyrethroid may facilitate the detection of hidden bedbugs by causing them to move around more, and may also potentially increase their exposure to any previously applied residual insecticide. **DO NOT** use any over-the-counter “foggers.” They are not very effective and may cause bedbugs to scatter.
- Fumigation or heat (or cold) treatment of batches of furniture, clothing or other items within chambers may be warranted and affordable in specific cases, but whole-structure fumigation to control bedbugs is seldom practical or economically feasible. And such treatments provide no residual effects at all.
- Re-inspection of infested structures and sites should be done about 10-21 days after any initial treatment, and (if needed) again about 10-21 days later, to detect, and to precisely target the treatment (if needed) of any continued infestation.¹

Carefully reintroduce cleaned items. Isolate and contain items that have been properly cleaned, laundered or heat treated. Heavy duty plastic bags or air tight containers may be used for this purpose. Clear bags and containers are preferable.

NEVER USE THE FOLLOWING PRODUCTS FOR BEDBUG TREATMENT:

Insecticide “bombs”, total release foggers, camphor, kerosene, diesel, gasoline, alcohol or other similar products. These products can cause serious health problems. They are dangerous if misused and can cause fires and explosions. These products are not appropriate for bedbug management.