

PORT HURON HOUSING COMMISSION BED BUG POLICY

PURPOSE

The common bed bug is fast becoming one of the most worrisome problems faced by housing agencies throughout Michigan and the rest of the country. Infestations are arising in almost every habitable location from homes to hospitals to movie theaters. Infestation in apartments can be problematic and require the cooperation of all residents to help control and/or prevent full-out infestation.

While bed bugs can and will infest single family homes, apartment buildings afford a near perfect living accommodation for them due to the large numbers of occupants residing in a close proximity to one another giving them the ability to migrate to other units.

Bed Bugs are usually brought into your home in suitcases and handbags and on clothing and furniture, especially previously used mattresses and other items. They can also travel between apartments in a building. There's no need to be embarrassed if these bugs end up moving in with you. Bed Bugs are not necessarily associated with dirty environments, but they flourish in clutter.

The Port Huron Housing Commission is committed to eradicating the bed bug problem but requires the full cooperation of all residents to do so because they are very difficult to control. Resident's full cooperation is extremely important in preventing the spread of bed bugs throughout the property and to eliminate the problem in individual apartments. Without resident assistance and cooperation the problem cannot be resolved and may spread to neighboring units. This policy will show our commitment as well as establish guidelines for employees and residents to follow in this process.

GENERAL INFORMATION ON BED BUGS

- They are difficult to see, especially in early molting stages, as they hide in cracks and other small places
- You may need a flashlight to locate them as they may hide in bedding, bed frames, covers, couches and chairs, window and door moldings, behind wallpaper and pictures, cracks in flooring, under carpet along walls, wall voids such as light sockets and outlets, luggage, backpacks, and clothing.
- They live in clusters
- They feed off of a host (human) blood when the host is inactive
- They are active and prefer to feed at night, but may feed during the day if the host (human) is inactive
- They will generally travel 20 or more feet from their nesting area if the host (human) moves to another location
- Females lay numerous eggs per day (up to 200 to 300 eggs in a lifetime)
- The eggs are very small, and almost invisible to the naked eye

- They can go without food (blood) for up to 140 days

POLICY

The PHHC will not deny tenancy to a potential resident on the basis of the tenant having experienced a prior bedbug infestation or give residential preference to any tenant based on a response to a question regarding prior exposure to bedbugs.

The PHHC will not charge a tenant to cover the cost of bedbug treatment (in accordance with HUD notice 2012-17), however, tenants will be notified of their rights and responsibilities and are expected to cooperate with the treatment efforts, as tenant cooperation is crucial in prevention and control of infestation.

1. Prevention

A. For Residents:

- 1) Vacuum your home regularly. If you do have bed bugs, make sure you close the vacuum bag tightly and dispose of it outside your home.
- 2) Tenants are prohibited from transporting personal belongings that contain fabric through common areas of buildings unless they are contained (in plastic bags, wrapped in plastic, etc.)
- 3) Tenants are required to bag laundry prior to taking it to the laundry facilities if you transport your laundry through common areas. Place clothing in washer or dryer directly from the sealed bag to prevent an infestation of the laundry facility. Wash and/or dry on the high heat setting.
- 4) Tenants are prohibited from bringing in items that contain fabric found on the curb side or in dumpsters.
- 5) Avoid picking up used mattresses or second-hand upholstered furniture because it's hard to see whether they harbor bed bugs. If you do, inspect them thoroughly before bringing them into the building or your apartment.
- 6) We recommend that you seal your mattresses and box springs with plastic or hypo-allergenic zippered covers. Items such as this specific for bed bugs are sold at local stores.
- 7) Scrub furniture with soapy water or a household cleaning product to remove any possible bed bugs or their eggs.
- 8) Second hand clothing should be placed in a sealed, plastic bag and emptied directly into the washing machine. Wash in hot water and

dry on hot setting to kill bed bugs and their eggs.

- 9) Keep your home clean and clutter-free.
- 10) The Housing Commission will sporadically insert the attached brochure in the newsletter (Appendix C).

B. For Employees:

- 1) Do not perform non-emergency work or inspections in units that have been confirmed to have bed bugs. Work not completed will be tracked by the Maintenance Clerk to ensure completion after the unit has been rid of the problem.
- 2) The following should always be followed as a precautionary measure whether the unit is known to have bed bugs or not:
 - a. Set your personal belongings only on hard surfaces, no cloth.
 - b. Wear gloves and the disposable coveralls provided, disposing of coveralls immediately upon exiting the unit and place them in a sealed plastic bag for disposal.
 - c. Do not brush up against anything fabric which includes bedding, couches, chairs, curtains, clothing, etc.
 - d. Do not move items with fabric. If they are in the way of completing the work, request the tenant to move them.
 - e. Should you feel you need to take further precautions, place all of your clothing including your shoes in the dryer on high heat for 20 minutes immediately upon getting home.
- 3) All common areas, offices, etc. will be inspected regularly for bed bugs.

2. Discovery and Reporting

Bed bugs are small brownish flattened insects. They're about 4 mm long (1/8 in.) and visible to the naked eye. They're active at night and can usually be seen along the seams of mattresses. They feed on human blood.

Itchy skin and insect bites are clues that you may have bed bugs in your home although not everyone will have a reaction to their bites. You'll usually see three or four bites in a straight line or grouped together. Exposed areas of your arms, legs and back are more susceptible to bites. Also look for small black stains "blood spots" on your sheets, pillows, or mattress seams. Bed bugs may also be hiding in cracks or crevices in your furniture.

Bed bugs will try to live as close as possible to their food source which is why

they can often be found directly on the mattress in the tufts and folds, along the seam, and even inside the mattress.

A. By Tenants

- 1) Tenants are required to report the discovery or suspicion of bed bugs immediately to the Maintenance line (810) 984-6410 giving the details of the location. The faster you act, the better the results will be.
- 2) Tenants are informed of this requirement in the Tenant Handbook as well as in various newsletters.
- 3) Failure to report immediately could be considered tenant negligence and eviction could occur.
- 4) Don't try to solve the problem yourself. Total release foggers (bug bombs) are not effective against bed bugs and may harm your health or your family's health.

B. By Employees

- 1) Any employee discovering or suspecting bed bugs in any location of the Port Huron Housing Commission including individual units must report it immediately to a Supervisor.

C. The Supervisor receiving the notification shall inform the designated personnel.

3. Treatment

The tenant acknowledges receipt of this policy through their signature on the Lease noting they have received the House Rules located in the Tenant Handbook to which this policy is attached. Through this acknowledgment, the tenant agrees to the steps required for effective bed bug treatment. Violation of these provisions could lead to termination of tenancy and accountability for damages.

A. Inspection

- 1) The Maintenance Director or designee will contact the tenant and all neighboring/adjacent tenants immediately to schedule an inspection as soon as possible to prevent the possibility of migration.
- 2) Upon arrival for the inspection, the Maintenance Director or designee will request the tenant's cooperation by:
 - a. Asking them to remove all bedding from the mattresses and

box springs so they are fully exposed for inspection.

b. Seeking their assistance where ever else needed.

- 3) The Maintenance Director or his designee will perform the inspection to determine if bed bugs are present.
- 4) The Executive Director, Deputy Director, and Maintenance Director have been issued copies of the attached "Michigan Manual for the Prevention and Control of Bed Bugs", noted as Appendix D.

B. If bed bugs are present:

- 1) The Maintenance Director or designee along with the Pest Control Company will determine the number and locations of units requiring treatment.
- 2) An appointment will be made for treatment with the Pest Control Company currently under contract and the tenant(s) affected will be issued a notice "How to Prepare for Treatment" which is attached as Appendix A.
 - Tenant agrees to permit Landlord into the apartment, with proper notice, to treat for or monitor bed bugs during the term of tenancy.
 - Tenant understands that he/she may arrange for family members or friends to help prepare for bed bug inspection and treatment if required.
- 3) Port Huron Housing will complete their portion of the necessary preparations.
- 4) If the tenant is ready, treatment will be completed on the specified date.
- 5) If the tenant was not ready, an alternative appointment could be scheduled or the Housing Commission may perform the preparation on behalf of the tenant at the tenant's expense depending on the severity and urgency of the situation

C. If bed bugs are not present:

- 1) The unit will not be treated for bed bugs.
- 2) The unit will be inspected for signs of other inspect infestation.
- 3) If the tenant made the report due to skin irritation (possible bites),

they will be asked to consider other biting insect exposure, perhaps outdoors, or other cause of skin irritation.

- 4) If bugs were present, however not bed bugs, the Housing Commission along with the Pest Control Company will identify the type of insect infestation and treat accordingly.

4. Follow Up

- A. Units treated will be re-inspected and cleared or scheduled for further treatment. If cleared, obtain verbal confirmation from the Pest Control Company of clearance and record the date and time it was cleared by the Pest Control Company on the Log and Service Report.
- B. Any repairs required following treatment, such as wall repairs, will be performed by the Maintenance Department after sufficient time has passed to ensure the problem has been resolved.
- C. Residents are issued a "Post Treatment" information sheet which is attached as Appendix B.

5. Documentation

- A. The Maintenance Clerk will maintain:

- 1) A log that includes all units that have or have had bed bug problems stating the following for each unit:
 - a. Date we were informed of the problem
 - b. Date treatment was received
 - c. Date cleared
 - d. Tenant's name
- 2) A Service Report on Bed Bugs by unit detailing:
 - a. Tenant name and address
 - b. Date problem reported
 - c. Date "How to Prepare for an Inspection" notice was issued
 - d. Date of inspection
 - e. Documentation on if the tenant was ready for the inspection (noting what was not done)
 - f. Date "How to Prepare for Treatment" notice was issued
 - g. Date and type of treatment (or dates through completion)
 - h. Documentation on if the tenant was ready for the treatment (noting what was not done)
 - i. Date the unit was cleared of bed bugs (attach copy from Pest Control Company)

File in Unit File.

**PORT HURON HOUSING COMMISSION
APPENDIX A TO BED BUG POLICY**

Port Huron HOUSING Commission

905 Seventh Street - Port Huron, Michigan 48060

Phone: (810) 984-3173 - Fax: (810) 984-6430

Date and time of treatment appointment: _____

YOU MUST PREPARE AS NOTED BELOW BY YOUR APPOINTMENT TIME TO AVOID PREPARATION COSTS WHICH COULD BE APPROXIMATELY \$175 OR MORE!

What **YOU** must do to prepare for treatment:

- *Strip bed, launder sheets, pillowcases, mattress pad and blankets. Let bed completely clear.
 - *Remove all items from closets and place in plastic bags.
 - *Remove everything from dresser drawers, night stands, tables and place in plastic bags. Remove all drawers from dressers, night stands, etc.
 - *Move all furniture at least 18" from wall to give access to all of the walls for treatment.
 - *Remove mirrors, pictures and other wall hangings from walls and place in center of room.
 - *Launder or dry clean all clothing and drapes.
 - *Remove all "clutter" and other unnecessary items from infested rooms.
 - *Thoroughly vacuum carpet in all rooms especially where the carpet meets the wall.
- Also vacuum:
- Mattresses and their seams and folds
 - All upholstered furniture including couches and chairs.
 - Closets, shelves, dressers and night stands.
- *Place vacuum bags in sealed plastic bags and discard.
 - *Remove any ripped/torn materials or heavily infested items.
 - *Remove mattress and box spring from frame.
 - *Remove all fabric from bottom of box spring for proper inspection and treatment
 - *Remove all pets, cover all fish tanks and turn off any pumps or aerators.

What **PORT HURON HOUSING COMMISSION** will do:

Prior to service, a PHHC employee will be in your unit to drill ¼" holes in your wall at a minimum height of 24" from the floor. These holes will be drilled in all rooms that are to be treated, including closets and hallways. The holes will remain until all bedbug treatment is completed, which may take months. Then, an employee will be back in to repair and paint the holes.

DURING TREATMENT APPOINTMENT:

No humans or pets are allowed on the premises during application and are not allowed back in their unit for at LEAST two hours after treatment. The Pest Control company CANNOT work if anyone is present. Please make prior arrangements to vacate your unit during the treatment time.

A Port Huron Housing Commission employee will be present and accompany the Pest Control company during each stage of treatment.

Tenant Rights and Responsibilities

Tenants are strongly encouraged to immediately report the suspicion of possible bedbugs in a housing unit or other areas of the property. Early reporting allows the pests to be identified and treated before the infestation spreads. Tenants are the first line of defense against bedbug infestations and should be encouraged to create living environments that deter bedbugs. This includes reducing unreasonable amounts of clutter that create hiding places for bedbugs, and regular checking of beds and laundering of linens.

Bedbug infestations can cause health concerns, including physical discomfort and may contribute to stress and anxiety on the part of the residents. Tenants should be advised of the following:

1. A PHA may not deny tenancy to a potential resident on the basis of the tenant having experienced a prior bedbug infestation, nor may an owner give residential preference to any tenant based on a response to a question regarding prior exposure to bedbugs.
2. A tenant reporting bedbugs may expect expeditious response and attention by the PHA, but should be advised that inspection and, if necessary, treatment of bedbugs may take time to schedule. The inspections should occur within three calendar days of the tenant report when possible.
3. Following a report of bedbugs, the PHA or a qualified third party trained in bedbug detection should inspect the dwelling unit to determine if bedbugs are present. It is critical that inspections be conducted by trained staff or third party professionals. The PHA may enter the unit to perform these activities, in accordance with the lease.
4. If bedbug infestation is found in the unit, the tenant may expect treatment to begin within five days of the inspection, though depending on the form of treatment, this may not be possible. Tenants should be advised that treatment may take several weeks.
5. Tenants are expected to cooperate with the treatment efforts by allowing for heat treatment of clothing and furniture and refraining from placement of infested furniture or other items in common areas such as hallways. Tenant cooperation is shown to expedite the control of bedbugs and to prevent spreading of infestations.
6. Management may make staff available to help with moving and cleaning of furniture to accomplish the treatment effort.
7. The tenant will not be expected to contribute to the cost of the treatment effort.
8. The tenant will not be reimbursed the cost of any additional expense to the household, such as purchase of new furniture, clothing or cleaning services.

PORT HURON HOUSING COMMISSION
APPENDIX B TO BED BUG POLICY



BED BUG INFORMATION SHEET

Post treatment

Now that your apartment has been treated and is free of bed bugs, you need to help prevent re-infestation by:

1. Avoid purchasing used cloth and/or stuffed furniture, mattresses and box springs whenever possible. (If you do purchase all items, check them out thoroughly before you bring them into your unit for evidence of bed bugs.
2. If you travel, thoroughly check all your baggage and clothing as well as any items you bought for evidence of bed bugs before bringing these items into your apartment.
3. Seal your mattresses and box springs with plastic or hypoallergenic zippered covers. This will keep bed bugs from re-infesting these items.
4. Place all your clothing, towels, bedding, scatter rugs, etc. in a dryer at medium to high temperature for at least 10 minutes.
5. Do not “dumpster drive” and bring these items into your unit.
6. Keep all clutter off the floor and keep everything stored in their proper places.

Report any evidence of re-infestation to Maintenance IMMEDIATELY by calling the 24 Hour Maintenance Line at 984-6410.

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**PORT HURON HOUSING COMMISSION
APPENDIX C TO BED BUG POLICY**

See attached brochure not number sequentially.

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**PORT HURON HOUSING COMMISSION
APPENDIX D TO BED BUG POLICY**

See attached "Michigan Manual for the Prevention and Control of Bed Bugs" not numbered sequentially.