

Bed Bugs in Los Angeles County

Key Facts about Bed Bugs



There's been a rise in bed bug complaints from hotels and motels across southern California. But bed bugs are a public health pest in many places, like jails, care clinics, apartment buildings, and even homes.

How they spread

People unknowingly bring the pest home in luggage after staying in infested hotel and motel rooms. Bed bugs also stow away in boxes and clutter that's moved from place to place. They also come in second-hand furniture, mattresses, or other things bought from thrift shops or other people. Bed bugs go from being an egg to an adult that can have babies in as little as 37 days. This quick life cycle lets females lay as many as 500 eggs during a lifetime. They can also go without feeding for 80 to 140 days, making it really easy for them to stay in all kinds of places.

How they impact public health

Bed bugs haven't shown to spread disease during feeding time. But the spit they spread when they bite does cause itching, welts, and a rash. Some people have no reaction, while others can have bad allergic reactions. They may also affect a person's mental health by causing anxiety and even trouble sleeping. Getting rid of these pests also affects a person's wallet by causing them to miss work or pay for costly treatment.

Where they're found

Bed bugs will make their home in any small crack. Bed bugs often stay very close to beds. That's why these pests are often found in these places:

- Edge ribbing or under the buttons of mattresses
- Between the mattress and box spring
- Inside area of the support frame
- Behind the headboard
- Behind or under night stands or under the drawers
- Furniture upholstery and frames
- Under decorator pillows
- Behind wall hangings
- Behind or under baseboards
- Floor/wall juncture where wall-to-wall carpeting is attached

You may find clumps of small, yellowish eggs, tarry black poop, egg shells, and shed skins in places where bed bugs live. Their feeding wounds often bleed for a short time after they bite, leaving speckles or streaks of blood on bed linens. This could be one of the first signs of a new infestation.

Getting rid of them

Getting rid of bed bugs isn't easy. In apartment buildings, these pests spread from one unit to the next through the spaces inside the wall where they travel along water pipes and electrical wires. Fixing the problem needs a joint effort between the building owner or manager and a well-trained pest control person who can use long-lasting pesticides.

Bedbug infestations in single family homes should also be treated by a well-trained pest control person. If this isn't possible, an infestation can be removed with pesticides that anyone can get. The key to getting rid of these pests is finding all the places they hide, like closets and connected rooms. Easy to find, liquid household pesticides will control bed bugs on contact and on solid surfaces for a short amount of time, but they won't give long-term control. You should never put liquid pesticides straight on the mattress.

If you buy a bulbous duster, you can put boric acid or silica gel to certain places. These dusts give long-lasting control by staying on the surface of these common sites:

- Frame of the box spring mattress
- Cracks and crevices
- Spaces in between the wall through electrical and switch boxes
- Along the wall/floor juncture.

Check all furniture, upholstery, throw pillows, and draperies very closely for bed bugs. Vacuum them very well each day. Remove bed linens and vacuum the surface of the mattress and box spring, checking closely for rips or tears that create more hiding places. Lift the box spring and vacuum the bed support frame and all surfaces of the headboard. Use household cleansers to remove any spots of poop. Pump or spray pesticides on solid surfaces only. Keep this up until you see no other signs of bed bugs and no new bites.