

## Bed Bugs: Tenant Responsibilities

In response to the increasing bed bug epidemic, the City of Chicago recently passed a special ordinance. According to the Municipal Code of Chicago Sections 5-12-040 and 7-28-850, tenants of infected apartments must assume certain responsibilities, which will be outlined in this letter.

First and foremost, we advise you to ***exercise extreme caution*** when purchasing used items from craigslist, thrift stores, antique stores, flea markets, etc. If you even sit on a piece of furniture, a bed bug can latch on your clothing and infect your entire apartment when you get home. Same goes for your guests – they can bring bed bugs into your apartment via their clothing or luggage. Speaking of luggage, also exercise extreme caution during your own travels! Luggage is an extremely popular mode of transportation for bed bugs! And even if you think only one room has been infected, entire apartment be treated! Like most other insects, bed bugs spread quickly.

It is crucial that all tenants diligently follow all of the steps in this letter, as it is in your best interest to ensure the treatment is effective. As your landlord, we are financially responsible for the treatment, but it is the *tenants'* lives that are directly affected.

### **If you suspect your apartment is infected, you must:**

1. Inform Management. Please submit an online repair request, as this will immediately alert the property manager and maintenance staff.
  - i. Do NOT try to treat the issue yourself! Store-brought “treatments” spread the problem rather than remedy it!
2. Wash ALL clothing, bedding and towels in HOT water and use a HOT dryer.
  - i. You must take these items to the Laundromat. Do NOT use the common area laundry machines!
  - ii. When transporting laundry through the building, ensure that it is wrapped tightly to ensure bed bugs do not fall out of the bag and infect the hallways of building. Throw bags away when you get to Laundromat.
  - iii. Bring brand new, never been used bags to the Laundromat to transport laundry back into your apartment. Garbage bags are obviously the cheapest.
3. Seal the freshly washed items and do NOT put your clothes back in dresser or closet, or you may re-infect the items.
  - i. It may be TWO MONTHS before you can put your clothes back into your bedroom.
  - ii. Do NOT move furniture or items from one room to another, as bed bugs may travel with the furniture!
4. VACUUM the entire apartment, including the furniture and floorboards. Bed bugs can attach themselves to wood, so vacuum everything.
  - i. Dispose of vacuum bag immediately! Double bag and label “*bed bugs*” before throwing in dumpster/receptacle.
  - ii. Reduce clutter! Remove any areas where bedbugs can gather.
5. Only after you have finished steps 1-5 will the exterminator come in to treat the apartment.
  - i. A tenant must be present at the initial appointment, as well as all follow-up appointments (if needed)
  - ii. Tenants must abide by any further instructions given by exterminator.
6. DO NOT WASH OR CLEAN CARPETING/FLOORS FOR TWO MONTHS following the treatment (it is not a pesticide and it will not harm you).
7. It is necessary for bed bug eggs to hatch in order to kill them; unfortunately it may take about a week before adult bed bugs stop biting you.
8. Do not throw any furniture away unless instructed to do so by exterminator.
  - i. In most cases, belongings can be salvaged. However, in the event that something must be disposed of, we are not financially responsible. You must contact your renter’s insurance representative regarding coverage.

Again, please exercise caution regarding the items (and sometimes, people) you bring into your apartment, and you will likely never have to deal with bed bugs. But if you do, please *help us help you* by following the steps listed above! Thank you.