



Health and Safety  
Santé et sécurité

# HAZARD BED BUGS

## What are bed bugs?

Bed bugs are small parasitic insects that feed on blood. Their bites can result in several health issues, including skin rashes, psychological effects, and allergic symptoms. Symptoms may take between minutes to days to appear.

Eliminating bed bugs is often difficult, partly because they can survive up to around 300 days without feeding and can hide incredibly well. Infestations can happen in a variety of ways:

- brought in from a person's clothing, furniture or backpacks;
- proximity to other infested sites;
- animals like bats or birds can harbour bed bugs.

## Why is this a health and safety issue?

Bed bugs are a serious health and safety concern. Employees have the right to feel safe at work and should not worry about bringing pests home and affecting their families. Although bed bugs can occur anywhere, employers are responsible for ensuring that workplaces are safe and properly treated when infestations occur. This pest can also lead to other concerns like exposure to pesticides, anxiety and stress and the risk of spreading the infestation home.

## Best practices

Bed bugs are difficult to detect and eliminate. Many common pest control methods are ineffective because bed bugs hide extremely well and feed only every few days.

Effective prevention and treatment strategies include:

- Using trained detection dogs ("sniffer dogs") to identify infestations;
- Conducting building-wide inspections;
- Treating entire buildings when infestations are found, not just individual floors or sections;
- Tracking infestations to identify patterns in location, frequency, and timing.
- Covering all fumigation expenses for workers who find bed bugs in their homes after exposure at work;
- Providing accommodations like remote work;
- Training for employees and managers on identifying signs of bed bugs
- A written bed bug action plan for the workplace
- Record-keeping and monitoring of infestations



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## Exposure

Evidence of pests should always be reported. If you see any signs of bed bugs in the workplace:

- Notify your supervisor and your local Health and Safety Committee as soon as possible.
- Report it to the National Service Call Centre at 1-800-463-1850 or use their online form.
- Document the issue in writing and take photos.

If you think you have been exposed to bed bugs at work:

- Inspect your clothing, bags and equipment before leaving;
- Change into clean clothing before going home if possible;
- Check all items before bringing them into your home first;

If an area is suspected of being infested, use personal protective equipment such as coveralls, disposable shoe covers and gloves where appropriate and leave personal belongings in sealable plastic containers.

