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Bed Bug Prevention and Guidance

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OVERVIEW

Bed bugs remain one of the more challenging pest management issues facing the hospitality industry. These resilient insects can spread quickly, result in guest complaints, damage reputation, and lead to costly litigation. Implementing comprehensive prevention protocols and responding swiftly to suspected infestations are critical to protecting your property and guests.

BEST PRACTICES FOR PREVENTION

- **Routine Inspections** – Conduct regular inspections of all guest rooms focusing on high-risk hiding places: mattress seams, box springs, headboards, nightstands, furniture corners, and baseboards.
- **Staff Training & Awareness** – Teach housekeeping and maintenance how to identify bed bugs and early signs. Establish clear reporting procedures so suspected issues are escalated immediately.
- **Mattress & Furniture Management** – Consider bed bug-resistant mattress and box spring covers — these limit hiding spots and make inspections easier. Avoid clutter and excessive upholstery that can provide hiding spots. Inspect any second-hand furniture or decorative items before use.
- **Cleaning & Housekeeping Protocols** – Vacuum thoroughly around beds, furniture, baseboards, and crevices — seal and dispose of vacuum contents to prevent spread. Launder linens at high temperatures (≥120°F) to kill any hidden bugs or eggs.
- **Professional Pest Management** – Partner with licensed pest management professionals familiar with integrated bed bug control (chemical and non-chemical methods).

WHAT TO LOOK FOR

- **Reddish stains** on sheets (crushed bugs or blood spots).
- **Tiny dark spots** that smear when wiped.
- **Live bugs, eggs** or shed skins in mattress seams and crevices.
- **Musty, sweet odor** in heavily infested rooms.

IMMEDIATE RESPONSE PROTOCOL

- Take room out of service immediately.
- Leave vacuum, linens, towels and any items used to clean the room inside to prevent spreading.
- Contact your pest management professional for treatment.
- Remove headboard, stand mattress upright against wall and move furniture two feet from walls.
- Place all linens in sealed plastic bags.
- Discard items with stains/permanent soiling in separate sealed bags.
- Wash and dry kept linens at a temperate greater than 120°F for at least 30 minutes.
- Inspect adjacent rooms and/or floors.
- Return to inventory only after professional clearance confirms elimination.
- Document inspections, treatment and all other actions.

This is an information service of CHLA. It does not purport to serve as legal or other professional advice, and the counsel of competent legal professionals should always be sought.

BED BUG FACTS

Bed bugs are tiny, nocturnal insects that feed on human blood while people sleep. Adults are about the size of an apple seed.

They do not spread disease, but their bites can cause itching and other skin reactions.

Bed bugs can hitchhike on luggage, clothing, and personal items — not because of cleanliness levels. They hide in seams, cracks, headboards, mattresses, furniture, rugs, and other tight spaces.

Bed bugs can survive several months without feeding, making detection difficult.

Anyone can bring bed bugs into a property — bed bugs are non-discriminatory of property or brand.

GUEST SERVICE

Respond empathetically and promptly to guest reports and complaints.

Recommend all guest belongings remain in room until inspected.

Offer room change or upgrade.

Communicate transparently about your bed bug protocol.

LEGAL RESOURCES

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Questions or Concerns?
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