

# **Administrator's Vantage Point –**

## **How Residential Life Departments Are a University's Front-Line of Defense**

Unfortunately, bed bug infestations are rising at an alarming rate, and colleges and universities are often considered at the epicenter. The Residential Life department serves as both the eyes and ears of a school and represents the first line of defense against this insidious pest. In order to prevent bed bug incidents, and to stop these incidents from transitioning into infestations, these departments need to implement an awareness campaign to protect their students and dormitories against potential legal liabilities.



### **Areas to Teach Students or Housing Officers Inspect Daily**

- Residential Life officers should teach students how to spend the majority of their time searching mattresses, box springs and any of the surrounding areas. These areas can include headboards, night stands, lamp shades, or any pictures hanging on the walls.
- Areas should be searched from the bed out, rather than the bed in.



- Bed bugs are very flat and can slip between creases or often inside the stitching, tufting and edges of a mattress. Box springs, especially the wooded support structure within the underside of the dust cover are notorious sites for bed bug harborage. Make sure to inspect the frame of the bed as well.

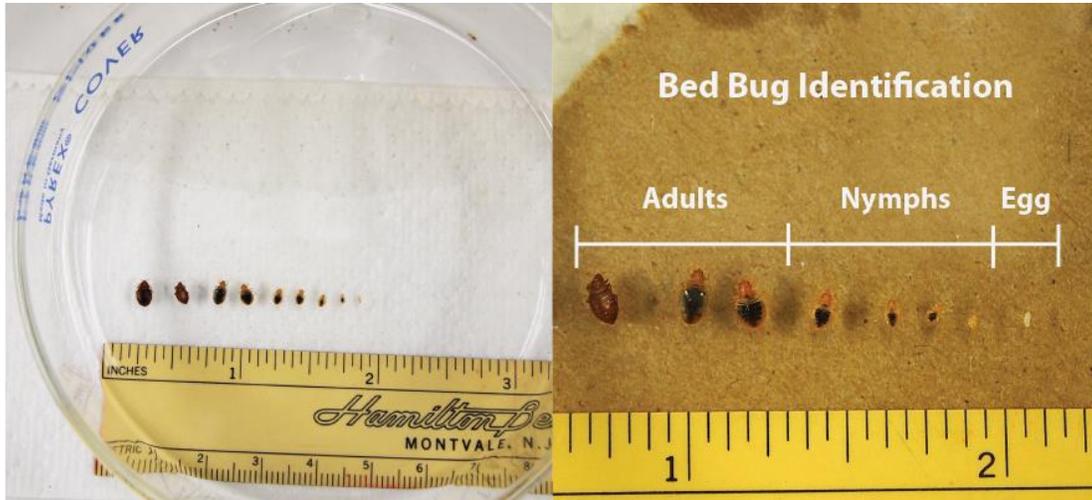


Adult Bed Bug  
M. Potter/Univ. Kentucky

- As a rule of thumb, if a credit card can fit through the area, a bed bug can fit as well. Classic areas are the space between the headboard and adjoining wall, holes made by picture hooks, and the underside of drawers.

### Tell-Tale Signs of Bed Bugs

- Actual sightings of bed bugs. Adults may approximate the size of an apple seed, but juvenile forms and eggs may be more difficult to identify because of their small size.



Relative size of bed bug egg, through nymph forms (instars) to adults  
From ZappBug.com

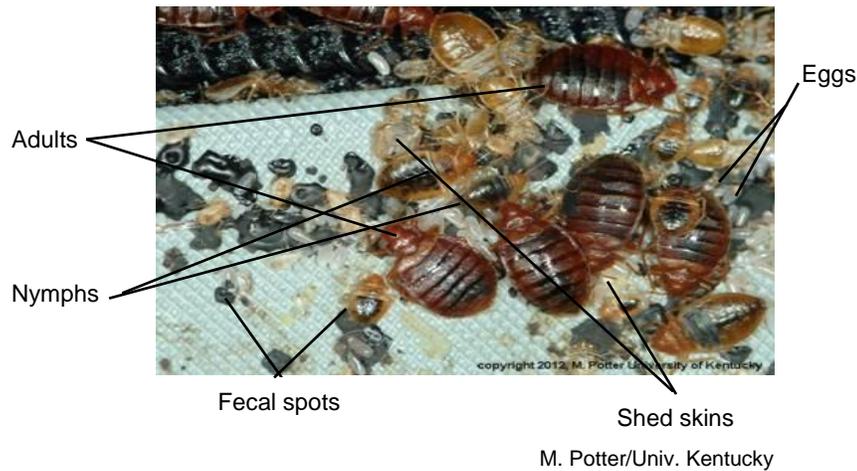
- Students who approach Residential Life with overt bites (welts) dispersed throughout their body. However, not all guests will show signs of bites and with some students it may be days after a bite before a welt appears.



Multitude of bed bug bites in a reactive host  
WebMD.com

- Bed bug droppings, which can often look like black magic marker smudges on fabric surfaces.

- The presence of casts or molted skins. As bed bugs mature, they will shed their skin on multiple occasions.



- Blood splattered linens. Often a sleeping student will unconsciously slap at a bed bug biting resulting in a blood stain on the linens.



Blood spotting on a pillow case  
Lou Sorkin/Am Mus Natl Htry

### **If a Dorm Has an Incident or is Infested**

- Until recently, colleges have not always been the most diligent about keeping proper documentation if they had received a report of a bed bug incident. Residential Life needs its students and officers to get in a habit of documenting every dorm room that reports an incident of potential bed bugs.
- Most of the time, a student will report a problem to Residential Life. In that case, the department should alert a Director as soon as possible to attend to an affected student.
- Offer to inspect a student's entire room as well as luggage and place personal belongings in a dryer. Make certain that the student's personal effects are securely bagged in the room; to the dryer; and, then replaced and secured in a clean bag until further notice.
- Contact your pest management professional (PMP) as soon as possible and quarantine the dorm room. Unless there an obvious positive sign of a bed bug, the PMP will provide either visual evidence and/or a positive alert by a trained dog inspection.



Thorough box spring inspection  
PJB Pest Mgmt Consulting

- A licensed PMP will determine whether this is a bed bug incident (one to a few bed bugs) versus an infestation (presence of adult, juvenile and bed bug eggs).
- Whether incident or infestation, do not let objects leave the room, including linens.
- If a room is determined to be positive for bed bugs, best practice suggests that the PMP inspect and treat the adjoining dorm rooms beside, below and above as if they were also affected.
- Do not move any furniture around. To contain the problem, have as few students involved as possible and minimize any disturbance of the room.
- When the PMP is finished treating a dorm room, properly wash/dispose of all linens in well-sealed laundry bags. Ecofriendly dissolving laundry bags work well. Thirty (30) minutes of continuous heat at the hottest possible setting available will kill any bed bugs.



Laundry Dryer  
American Maytag

- Dedicate special cleaning products to the affected dorm rooms. If a vacuum cleaner is used, clean the parts of a vacuum after every use with an alcohol-based or other product labeled to kill bed bugs on contact.
- To protect Residential Life staff, offer to clean any clothing onsite rather than giving them back and spreading any infestation.
- Although a dorm room may be cleared by the PMP as available for return by students, this dorm should be treated as a high-risk room for at least three-six months. High risk is defined as a dorm room requiring extra care through diligent inspection by Residential Life. After this period has elapsed without a reported incident, the risk level can be lowered, but Residential Life should keep a careful eye on any previously infested room for an additional 6 months.

*This article was provided by Joseph Latino, Chief Operating Officer at Allergy Technologies LLC which specializes in active mattress liners that are used against bed bugs and dust mites. For more information on how to protect your property, contact Joseph at [joseph@allergytechnologies.com](mailto:joseph@allergytechnologies.com) or call 866-978-6288.*