



Bed Bug Dos and Don'ts

Paul Bello Contributor

Here we are in 2012 with no end in sight to *The Great Bed Bug War*. As an industry we've gotten better at battling the bugs. But from a customer's perspective, our victories may take too long to achieve, include too much inconvenience and come at too great a cost. Assuredly the bed bugs are not slowing down. Compared to fire ants, gypsy moths and Asian lady beetles, bed bugs swept across the United States in just months while it took those other pests years to establish their foothold in certain regions.

Are bed bugs here to stay? It sure does look that way. Is our industry ever going to become as adept at remediating bed bug infestations as we are with other pests? We are getting better but we're not where we need to be yet. Is our industry ever going to discover the bed bug silver bullet? Perhaps, there are a lot of people working on that very objective across the globe on a daily basis.

The Great Bed Bug War rages on. Below are some Dos & Don'ts to consider when dealing with bed bugs for your review and consideration:

Do find and properly identify the presence of bed bugs before you treat an account.

Don't conduct treatment work based solely on the presence of bites.



Do know how to properly identify a bed bug.

Don't be fooled by other similar looking cimicidae that look very much like the common bed bug (*Cimex lectulais*), such as bat bugs.

Do become familiar and know the telltale signs of bed bugs you're looking for during an inspection.

Don't forget that telltale

signs of bed bug activity include fecal stains, shed skins, eggs, live bed bugs and carcasses.

Do know the common areas where you will likely find bed bugs during an inspection of an infested location.

Don't forget to be properly equipped when conducting an inspection and performing bed bug treatment work.

Do include an interview of the bed bug victim or resident as part of your account analysis and inspection process.

Don't forget to take notes during your inspection and document your findings.

Do provide written, accurate information about bed bugs to the customer.

Don't forget that bed bugs can have a dramatic emotional effect on their victims.

Do consider the resident's anxieties associated with being a bed bug victim when working within their home and communicating with them about their bed bug problem.

Don't forget that the customer views you as the bed bug expert when working at their home and that they may not fully understand what you're telling them.

Do take the time to fully explain your recommendations and ensure the customer understands what you're telling them about bed bugs.

Don't over promise and under deliver.

Do your best at every bed bug job.

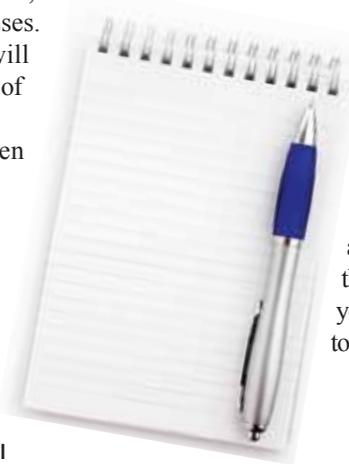
Don't forget that because bed bugs can hide anywhere you may need to inspect and treat everywhere.

Do use a suitable ladder when inspecting and treating for bed bugs.

Don't forget that bed bugs don't much care that you're a pest management professional (PMP).

You can easily transport bed bugs from account to account and bring bed bugs back to the office or home from work with you. Be sure you have suitable policies and procedures in place to prevent the cross contamination of bed bugs.

Continued on page S20





Continued from page S18

Do wear suitably colored clothing when conducting bed bug inspections and treatment work such that you can easily detect a bed bug that may inadvertently get on you while working at a bed bug infested account.



Don't forget that dogs can't talk; it's wise to visually confirm a canine alert of bed bug activity.

Do carefully document your bed bug work, especially at

multi-family account locations, to assure that no location is missed during your initial and follow-up bed bug work.

Don't let the tail wag the dog when doing bed bug work. As the bed bug professional, you know what needs to be done to successfully obtain 100-percent control at an account. Don't let a property manager dictate changes to your control program that you know will compromise your ability to attain control.

Do take your bed bug work seriously and ensure your customers do as well.

Don't forget that people are counting on you to save them from bed bugs in their home, and that if you fail to effectively control bed bugs in their home it's only a matter of time before they're bitten.



Bello is the author of The Bed Bug Combat Manual available online at www.pest-consultant.com and Amazon.com. He can be reached at paul.bello@att.net.

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