

Bed bugs are still a problem: here's what you can do about it.

While bed bugs haven't recently received the press they did several years ago, the miniature menaces have not stopped pestering multi-unit residential complexes. In fact, recently several apartment managers were sued by residents for chronic bed bug infestations.

Residents' complaints include the costs they encounter for having to replace furniture and bedding and the suffering caused by bites to them and families. In the recent cases, apartment managers are also being compelled to permanently eradicate the infestation.

In some cases, however, losses to property owners and managers can be even greater. In an October incident, a California complex had to shut down temporarily to deal with a bed bug infestation. On top of the lost rental income, the shutdown could mean having to cover temporary housing costs for displaced residents, as well as the expenses associated with pest control services. A bed bug infestation can also be a serious public relations problem, discouraging new, quality residents from renting from you or even looking at your building.

Exterminating bed bugs from an apartment complex includes treating furniture in units, duct systems and carpet. It can take multiple treatments, and dormant bugs can exist for longer than a year. Prevention includes vacuuming floors and furniture often, disposing of vacuum contents outside of the facility, wiping down walls and floors, washing linens frequently and eliminating clutter. Even with excellent preventive tactics, however, bugs can be brought in by new residents and visitors. A routine, professional pest control regimen might be a worthy preventative investment.

Before you have an active bed bug problem, it would be wise to institute a preventive routine and educate residents about anti-pest practices. Obtaining bed bug insurance coverage is also a smart move. Insurance programs that provided a multi-layer approach can be very successful. These often include inspections, professional pest management services, non-toxic solutions for pest control and prevention, discounted rates on anti-bed-bug supplies, covered costs of treating unit contents, as well as coverage for other financial losses associated with outbreaks. Additional living expenses for residents who are displaced temporarily for pest treatment may also be covered in some cases.

Using a strategic, comprehensive bed bug prevention and elimination plan can also help apartment property owners and managers defend against accusations of liability for resident losses since such programs indicate proactive measures and adherence to best practices. It also demonstrates to prospective residents an upmarket level of caretaking that makes your property more attractive than your competitors'.

Something bugging you? Just ask or share your thoughts!

Posted by **Global Administrator** on 11/19/2013 11:58:32 AM