

Curb alert for furniture filled with bed bugs

Wow! A free futon? Down two doors, there's a set of dining room chairs with clean upholstery? And these people are giving away a couch with no stains or holes? That is about \$2,500 I don't need to spend on furnishing my new apartment! But beware of the unwelcome bonus that might be hidden inside...

Finding clean, undamaged furniture for low prices or even for free on the Internet can be an exhilarating experience—especially for those just going out on their own and counting pennies. But apartment residents must be careful. Even items that are in good shape can be hiding critters inside. And that can create a nightmare for property managers and building owners.

While spraying used furniture with a germicide is a great idea, it doesn't prevent importing bed bugs and other icky creatures into your fresh and tidy apartment units. Even if you don't see active infestations, there could be eggs just waiting to hatch and multiply.

Bed bugs burrow into upholstered furniture—not just mattresses—and can even stow away in coffee tables and dressers. And once they invade one unit, they can migrate, creating a building-wide problem. Isolating the origination point can be very difficult, and many residents will expect the apartment owner or property manager to do something to eradicate the insects. If they involve the health department, the entire building could be scheduled for repeated treatment and follow-up inspections.

Exterminating alone may not do the trick, and many treatments may be necessary. Cooperation from residents is also key. Sometimes that includes daily vacuuming of mattresses and other upholstery, inspecting edges of furniture for teeny specs of bed bug detritus, and washing clothing and sheets in superhot water or special solutions. Often, wrapping infested items, such as mattresses and other expensive furniture, in a bed bug cover is recommended. It traps the bugs inside and starves them. Used in conjunction with vacuuming and chemical treatments, wrapping may prevent having to replace items. In some cities, there are bed bug launderers who treat affected clothing and bedding with steam, which kills the insects. Steam cleaning can also work for carpets.

It's not only used furniture that can import bed bugs into your multifamily residence. Luggage, clothing, rugs, purses and electronics can bring them in from infested hotels unbeknownst to the traveler. Bed bugs invade low-income housing and high-priced penthouses alike, so don't think your apartment is invincible.

Doing nothing as an apartment building property manager or owner of a residential multiunit living complex is not an option. Personal injury lawyers specializing in bed bug lawsuits advertise in cities and on the web suggesting plaintiffs can be compensated for emotional distress, lost wages due to side effects from bed bug bites, property damage such as having to discard furniture, medical bills, and permanent injury from bites, such as scarring.

Look into preventive measures, like repeatedly educating residents about prevention and elimination. And take immediate action if you should get a report of bed bug activity. Early intervention can keep the problem isolated while you rid affected units of the pests.

Posted by [Global Administrator](#) on 11/1/2016 8:07:33 AM