

AFSCME

Health & Safety Fact Sheet

Recommendations to Control Bedbugs at the Workplace

1. Bedbug Prevention Policy
2. Reporting and Response
3. Inspection
4. Cleaning, Vacuuming and Safe Storage
5. Education
6. Equipment Replacement (phase out use of fabrics on office equipment)
7. Better Treatment Options
8. For Those Impacted at Home

1. Bedbug Prevention Policy

- a. Management shall develop and implement a Bedbug Prevention Policy that includes the points below. Management shall provide impacted workers and labor representatives with an opportunity to review and provide feedback on the Bedbug Prevention Policy.

2. Reporting and Response

- a. Management shall establish and promote a policy and methods allowing for confidential, no retaliation reporting of bedbug sightings. This shall include reporting sightings of bedbugs at or adjacent to the main work location, at remote locations, in client homes or at the employee's residence.
 - i. Management shall establish an easy-to-use, confidential, retaliation-free bedbug reporting method via a hotline or dedicated email box to be checked daily by a management representative. Management shall respond to the reporting employee as soon as possible, but no later than two business days after the submission of a bedbug sighting report.

3. Inspection

- a. Management shall grant paid release time for regular physical inspections of potentially impacted work areas by union members (designated by the union). Regular inspections shall occur daily, or once per shift at start, as appropriate.
 - i. Inspections shall check for insects, clutter and other hazardous conditions.
 - ii. Checklist: A site-specific check-off list shall be created for bedbug/safety walk-throughs. Members who perform walk-throughs shall report findings to the union and management. Reports shall be documented with the union and with management.

4. Cleaning, Vacuuming and Safe Storage

- a. Management shall institute two levels of cleaning protocols at the worksite. One level of deep cleaning shall be applied during bedbug sightings or infestation and a second level applied when bedbug infestation has been brought under control (i.e., there are no more bedbugs seen).
 - i. Management shall develop and implement a written cleaning policy reflecting these two protocols, so it is easy to resume deeper, more frequent cleaning when needed.
 - ii. During times of infestation, management shall ensure that vacuuming is performed throughout the facility (not just in impacted areas) at least once daily until bedbugs are eliminated; then vacuuming shall be performed two to three times a week for maintenance.
 - iii. During periods of infestation, vacuuming shall include floors and everything covered in fabric as well as corners, chairs, walls and partitions.
- b. Prevention actions:
 - i. Management shall provide each employee with clean, adequately-sized containers that seal securely to store uniform and personal items.
 - ii. Workers shall be encouraged to store uniforms and items that travel from work to home in closed containers, bins or packaging to prevent transporting or picking up insects.

5. Education

- a. Management shall post signs for employees about bedbug identification, bedbug reporting procedures, prevention actions, confidentiality and the non-retaliation policy.
- b. Management shall develop a Bedbug Awareness Training for all employees working in or adjacent to locations or vehicles where bedbugs appear or have appeared in the past. Training shall include:
 - i. Bedbug Prevention Policy.
 - ii. Bedbug identification information.
 - iii. Prevention and treatment options.
 - iv. Bedbug response procedures for workers who travel to or work in external locations or client homes, including for workers who transport people or share vehicles that can be infested.
- c. Management shall provide training to new hires and to impacted employees whenever infestation occurs or is reported.
 - i. Training shall be provided whenever management receives reports of bedbugs in employees' homes, vehicles or remote locations.
 - ii. Retraining shall be provided at least annually.
 - iii. Training about employers' Bedbug Prevention Policy shall be effective.

6. Equipment Replacement

- a. Whenever possible, management shall phase out workplace use of fabric covered chairs, equipment and partitions because fabrics can house or encourage infestation.
- b. Management shall replace fabric-covered chairs, equipment and partitions with ergonomically appropriate chairs, equipment and partitions manufactured with moisture impervious and cleanable surfaces.

7. Better Treatment Options

Bedbug treatment protocols using steam-cleaning or freezing are not effective methods to control bedbug infestation, although application of thermal technologies does kill the insects and eggs it can reach when applied properly. *Even the most effective pesticide technologies require recurrent applications and daily deep cleaning to control infestation.*

- a. **Long-term impact:** Management and those impacted by bedbugs at home may consider use of a bedbug technology called Aprehend produced by ConidioTec. Aprehend is a liquid spray product utilizing the spores of a specific fungus¹ that kills bedbugs. It is applied through a solvent base and generally requires repeated applications to remove infestation.



- i. Management shall consult the Safety Data Sheet (SDS) on Aprehend² before application to verify safety and appropriateness.

1. The union and all employees shall be given access to the SDS for Aprehend and pesticide products used at the worksite (OSHA 29 CFR 1910.1200).

- ii. Workers who apply this product shall use all precautions listed on the SDS.

1. Whenever possible, application shall occur when impacted areas of the facility are not occupied.
 2. Workers who apply this product shall do so under their employer's Respiratory Protection Program and shall be provided with and use fit-tested N95 or better respirators, as per OSHA 29 CFR 1910.134.
 3. In locations with 24/7 operations, impacted workers shall have the opportunity to review the SDS before application of this product or other pesticides.
 4. Impacted workers shall be permitted to utilize alternative work locations to avoid potential health reactions during or after product application.

- b. **Short-term impact:** Bedbug removal experts have recommended that people use simple isopropyl (rubbing) alcohol to kill bedbugs on contact. Isopropyl alcohol can serve as a bug-spray preventative. ***Reminder: Alcohol is highly flammable and should be used with caution.***

8. For Those Impacted at Home

- a. Management shall allow employees to use Administrative Leave or Paid Time Off (PTO) to manage bedbug infestations at home and should contact the union when requesting time off to manage infestation.
- b. Members are encouraged to reach out to personal landlords to schedule bedbug specific treatment of their homes by certified pesticide professionals.

For more information, contact research@afscme.org

¹ <https://rockwelllabs.com/aprehend/>

² [Aprehend RTU SDS 10-13-20.pdf](#) APREHEND®: EPA Registration No. 89186-1 SDS Revision Date: October 13, 2020