

**Policy Type:** Reducing Risk of Bed Bugs and Managing Infestation  
**Policy Area:** Health and Safety  
**Policy No.:**  
**Effective Date:** June 13, 2007  
**Date Reviewed/Revised:**



## 1. Preamble

WoodGreen Community Services sets overall risk management policies in compliance with Regulatory Bodies/Relevant Legislation.

WoodGreen works with many low-income, vulnerable individuals and families, who are at greater risk due to their life circumstances, higher density and/or more transient living situations for acquiring bed bugs.

WoodGreen will strive to protect the health and safety of staff, clients, students, and volunteers by having procedures in place to reduce the risk of bed bug transmission to any staff, student, volunteer, client, or community member.

This policy applies to all areas where services are provided: reception areas, meeting rooms, staff offices, clients' homes, other community agencies, and community settings etc. All staff, students, volunteers, have direct and frequent direct contact with clients. Therefore, staff, students, and volunteers have a key role in the early identification and prevention of bed bug transmission and infestation.

This policy outlines the role of management, staff, students, and volunteers in reporting, responding, and implementing strategies to reduce bed bug transmission and infestation, in the context of providing services to clients.

## 2. Policy

### 2.1 Assessment and Screening for Staff, Students, and Volunteers

It is important that staff, students, and volunteers use their good judgement and ensure that they are not taking unnecessary risks that may bring bed bugs into WoodGreen and/or their homes. This is consistent with WoodGreen's philosophy of reducing risk and ensuring the well being of its staff, students, volunteers, clients, and other members of the community.

Prior to commencing service delivery, and during the course of service delivery, staff, students, and volunteers will assess and screen whether or not clients have bed bugs or are suspected to have bed bugs. If during the initial assessment or during the course of providing services, a staff, volunteer, or student suspects or confirms that a client has bed bugs, the staff, volunteer, or student will respond the following way, in a respectful manner:

- 1) remove themselves from the client's home (if it's during a home visit).
- 2) request that the client leave WoodGreen property, if bed bugs are seen on the client
- 3) immediately report the information to their supervisor.
- 4) work with their supervisor to develop a risk assessment and risk management plan.

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**Approved by: Health and Safety Committee**

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**Date Approved: June 13, 2007**

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File name: U/H&S/ReducingRiskofBedBugs

Date prepared: June 2007

5) work with the supervisor to develop a strategy for providing ongoing services to the client, in a way that is safe and reduces the risk to the staff involved and to WoodGreen.

## **2.2 Reporting Responsibilities for Staff, Students and Volunteers**

All staff, students, and volunteers must report the following circumstances regarding bed bugs to their supervisor **immediately**, within the context of service delivery:

- any bed bug sightings
- potential bed bug sightings (if not able to accurately identify the type of bug)
- client reports that he or she has bed bugs
- client reports that client suspects that he or she has bed bugs
- staff suspects that client has bed bugs

Reporting can be done in person, by e-mail, or by leaving a phone message. If the immediate supervisor is not available, then a report is given to another supervisor in the Unit or the Unit Director.

Also, staff, volunteers, and students must report to their supervisor if they suspect or see signs of bed bugs in their own homes, **immediately**. Supervisors and other WoodGreen management staff will ensure the privacy of staff, volunteers, and student placements who suspect or acquire bed bugs in their own homes, if staff wish to maintain their privacy around this issue. These reports, with identifying information will only be shared with the Director of the Unit, the Director of Human Resources, the Vice President of Planning and Operations, and the President. When necessary, WoodGreen management staff will share information about strategies being implemented regarding bed bugs in a general way, as a risk reduction strategy, without identifying the staff or program areas affected.

In order to be effective in reducing the transmission and managing infestation, reports of bed bugs must be as specific and detailed as possible, including client's name (or description of client), address, time and date of when suspicion, actual sighting, or client report occurred.

WoodGreen management staff will implement measures quickly to prevent and manage further transmission and infestation.

## **3. Procedures**

### **3.2 Routine Risk Reduction Procedures to Follow to Reduce Transmission & Infestation**

During the course of service provision, staff, students, and volunteers may encounter clients who have bed bugs in their homes, or in their belongings; clients may bring bed bugs into WoodGreen sites on their clothing. In order to reduce the risk of transmission or infestation, staff, students, and volunteers must following the following routine precautions:

- Avoid physical contact with clients, if this is not part of service delivery.
- Ensure clients sit in plastic covered chairs, at WoodGreen all sites (instead of cloth chairs).
- Assess initial and ongoing risk of bed bug transmission and infestation through service provision.
- Work with supervisors to develop and follow a risk management plan, when providing service to a client who has bed bugs or is suspected to have bed bugs.

- Do not bring any client items and belongings into WoodGreen buildings, unless discussed and approved by the Unit Director.
- Only accept donations or gifts from clients or donors within the guidelines outlined in WoodGreen's Donations Policy and Procedures.

### **3.3 A Service Provision Risk Management Plan**

As soon as a staff, student, or volunteer reports that a client has bed bugs or there is a suspicion that a client has bed bugs, the supervision will schedule a meeting with the staff, student or volunteer to put into place a risk management plan. The risk management plan may consist of the following types of strategies:

- Identifying places to provide services other than the client's home or at a WoodGreen site, such as a coffee shop, instead of their home.
- Working with the client to put into place a strategy for identifying and eradicating bed bugs in their home. This may include providing a client with information (verbally and/or in writing) about bed bugs; identifying external or other WoodGreen internal resources that can be put into place to address issue (homemaking, extreme Cleaning Services, landlord interventions, other agency resources); contacting and/or working with the landlord to ensure that treatment of the unit occurs.
- Sharing and requesting that clients follow procedures that reduce bed bug transmission until the bed bugs are eradicated in their homes, such as wearing clothing that has been securely bagged after clothing has been washed and dried for 20 minutes in a clothes dryer.
- Carrying and wearing appropriate clothing, when providing services in the homes of clients who have bed bugs or are suspected to have bed bugs (e.g. special suits, appropriate shoes).
- Arranging for phone services, if possible, until such time that a client no longer has bed bugs in their home.

Each program area at WoodGreen will develop and/or gather appropriate written information to hand out to clients that have bed bugs or are suspected to have bed bugs.

Each management staff in the organization will keep records of the addresses and unit numbers where bed bugs exist or are suspected. This information will be shared during Unit Management meetings. The Unit Directors will share this information with other Unit Directors across the organization, as a way of minimizing risk and monitoring levels of transmission and infestation in the community.

### **3.4 Office Preparation Procedures Before and After a Bed Bug Spraying**

In preparation for bed bug spraying, staff need to pull away as many things from the office walls as possible, take things off of the floor, and throw out paper boxes. The spray is effective for 4 weeks and it is safe to enter office space a minimum of 3 hours after a spray has taken place. Staff are advised to wipe their desks after a spray. As a preventative measure, all supplies in staff offices must be stored in air tight plastic containers.

#### **4. Failure to Comply with Bed Bug Policy**

Failure to comply with the Reducing Risk of Bed Bugs Policy and Procedures may result in disciplinary action. Taking precautions and reducing the risk of bed bug transmission is a very important factor in service delivery at WoodGreen. Staff, students, and volunteers all have a vital role to play in decreasing the transmission of bed bugs and managing bed bug infestation.

**WoodGreen Community Services**  
**Reducing Risk and Managing Infestation**  
**Recommended Strategies, Information and Resources about Bed Bugs**

In recent years bed bugs are making a come back in North America and are increasingly being encountered in homes, apartments, hotels, dormitories, shelters, and modes of transportation. According to the City of Toronto's department of public health, there are no known diseases associated with bed bugs. People who are more sensitive to the bite can have localized allergic reactions. Scratching the bitten areas may lead to infections (please see attached for a City of Toronto Fact Sheet on Bed Bugs).

Information about bed bugs are available on number of websites, including the following:

<http://www.ca.uky.edu/entomology/entfacts/ef636.asp>

[http://www.vch.ca/environmental/docs/2005\\_08\\_guide\\_bed\\_bug\\_control\\_pamphlet.pdf](http://www.vch.ca/environmental/docs/2005_08_guide_bed_bug_control_pamphlet.pdf)

<http://usachppm.apgea.army.mil/ento/WebFiles/bedbugsdeployCHPPMEUR2003.pdf>

<http://www.entomology.cornell.edu/Extension/DiagnosticLab/IDLFS/BedBugs/BedBugs.html#N100A3>

Information from these sites is summarized below to provide some suggestions how to identifying and reduce bed bug transmission. All WoodGreen staff, students, and volunteers need to be vigilant in identifying and playing a role in managing bed bugs in the context of service delivery.

**Recommended strategies that staff, volunteers, and students can take to reduce the risk of bring bed bugs into their homes.**

The risk of coming into contact with bed bugs, by staff, student placements, and volunteers through service provision has increased over the past few years. Therefore, we are recommending that staff, student, and volunteers who may be exposed to bed bugs or are at high risk for exposure at WoodGreen implement the following strategies to reduce the risk of bringing bed bugs home or into the work place.

- When returning home from work, put all of your clothes into a plastic bag and have a new set of clothes ready to change into. Seal the plastic bag and carry it to a clothes dryer. Put the bag in the dryer and take the clothes out of the plastic bag. Turn on the clothes dryer for 20 minutes, and discard the sealed bag.
- Check bed room furniture regularly for signs of bed bugs, to avoid a more serious infestation.
- Be aware of and alert while providing services to clients,
- Be informed of what bed bugs look like, signs that bed bugs are present, what can be done to reduce bed bug transmission, and what to do to eradicate bed bugs.

**Some Signs that Bed Bugs are Present in a Home**

- Bed bugs are active at night and can be found during the day hiding in cracks and crevices in walls, floors, beds, under carpets, and furniture. They are oval, chestnut brown insects and are flattened from top to bottom, measuring less than ¼ of an inch in length, with no wings.

- Bites on skin: people react to bites differently. Some feel the bites right away. They appear as small bumps, usually in two, or three at a time. They are usually in a line. Some people do not feel, or react to the bites at all. They generally like to bite near veins, where there is lots of blood.
- Blood stains, spots, or streaks often appear in the morning on mattress and sheets/blankets, following the bites.
- Tiny black spots on mattress, which is feces.
- Moulting: when a bed bug feeds, it grows and moults it's old skin.
- Eggs, are hard to find. They are almost clear and when nearly hatched, they can be the size of a piece of rice.
- When an infestation is severe, an odour is evident. Often described as being a sweet smell, like rotten raspberries.
- Pets may scratch from the bites. Pets need to be treated as well, with Advantix (available from a veterinarian).
- A bed bug can grow to be the size of an apple seed. The young can be the size of a pin head. When they feed they become engorged and change colour. They turn a reddish brown just after feeding. The young are sometimes almost clear, or a light rusty colour.
- They spread quite fast and the incubation period is roughly ten days. They can reach maturity in less than a month, depending on how many times they feed. They feed five times before they are mature. Females can lay upwards of 500 eggs per lifetime. Bed bugs can survive a year without feeding.

### **Some Places that Bed Bugs Can Hide**

- In beds (tufts, seams, and folds of mattresses, and bed frames)
- Wall hangings, drapery pleats, behind mirrors.
- Any narrow space or crevice or crack (such as a window, or door frame, baseboards, cracks in the wall/floor plaster or moldings, floor cracks, cracked furniture).

### **The Life Cycle of a Bed Bug**

- Bed bugs undergo a gradual metamorphosis (change in form) and the young resemble the adult.
- The young are called nymphs. Under ideal conditions bugs feed regularly when temperatures are above 70° F.
- Eggs are deposited in batches of from 10 to 50 in crevices of bed frames, floors, walls and similar household sites. When fresh, the eggs are coated with a sticky substance that causes them to adhere to any object on which they are deposited. Eggs are not deposited at temperatures lower than 50° F.
- Eggs hatch in 6 to 17 days but may take as long as 28 days in cooler temperatures. The nymphs begin to feed as soon as they can locate a host.
- They molt 5 times before reaching maturity and the nymphal period lasts about 6 weeks. There may be up to three generations per year in our climate.
- Bed bugs feed for a period of 3 to 5 minutes, after which they are engorged and drop off the host.
- They crawl into a hiding place and remain there for several days digesting the meal.

- When hungry again, they emerge from the hiding place and search for a host.
- If no food is available, the new nymphs may live for several weeks in warm weather, or several months in cool weather.

### **Some Suggested Ways of Eliminating Bed Bugs**

- In most cases, it is prudent to hire a professional to treat the infested area.
- When discarding any infested furniture, make sure it is wrapped in plastic, or covered, as they will fall, or crawl out when it is being moved and possibly spread throughout the unit.
- Vacuuming is a very important tool. Vacuum the entire mattress, paying close attention between seams. Place the vacuum bag into a sealed plastic bag when completed and discard immediately.
- Keep clean laundry tied in bags, until treatment to avoid re-infestation.
- For clothing that can only be dry cleaned – put in double garbage bags with moth balls and leave closed until after treatment.
- Check books, magazines, papers in the room where bugs are found.
- Vacuum floors around bed, especially if there is wood flooring.
- Often it is necessary to discard any infested pieces of furniture.
- Put double sided tape along bed frame and baseboards; this will catch any bugs and will allow for monitoring of bugs.

### **What to Do Before Spraying**

- Wash all floors, ceiling to baseboards, this may remove any eggs stuck on walls and baseboards.
- Wait until floor is dry and vacuum all areas of the floor and baseboards.
- Clear all clutter from areas and move furniture into middle of room.
- Bag all clothing, curtains; anything that is made of a cloth material. Wash all cloth material in hot water and then place in a dryer for at least 20 minutes. Washing and drying can kill the eggs. Pest control companies will not spray clothing, or bedding.
- Remove all cushions from chairs and couches. Couches have many hiding spots and can become heavily infested, especially if someone sleeps on them.

### **After the Spraying**

- Do not wash, or vacuum the area for at least 10 days. The chemical left behind from the spraying has a residue that kills bugs when they come out of hiding.
- Caulk all baseboards, cracks in walls and ceilings.
- Varnish bed frame or any other wooden furniture may be infested; this will secure any eggs and prevent them from hatching.
- Put double sided tape (painters tape) on baseboards and around the bed frame; this will catch any bugs coming out of hiding, or trying to get on the mattress.
- Cover the mattress and pillows with a plastic cover or plastic wrap.
- Resume vacuuming a few days after the treatment. Vacuum everyday. Vacuum the mattress as much as possible.
- It is common to see bed bugs after a spray.