

Recommendations and Strategies:

**Arising from the Bed Bug Summit at Queen's Park,
held on September 29, 2010,
to help Combat, Control and Contain
Bed Bug Infestations in our Communities
and Our Province**

By:

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1. Province-Wide Public Education and Public Awareness Campaign

A successful strategy in the fight against Bed Bugs requires the cooperation of everyone, including all levels of government, public and private stakeholders, and the public at large.

A province-wide public education and public awareness campaign should be developed by the Province of Ontario, to ensure the public is aware of ways in which they can identify, prevent, and control Bed Bug infestation.

The Provincial Government should develop a public education campaign in partnership with local public health agencies, local municipalities, local school boards, local transit authorities, hospitals, private sector partners in housing, and the hospitality industry.

Brochures, advertisements, public transit and public service announcements, in multiple languages, should be distributed to the public at large, which includes information on how to identify, prevent and control Bed Bugs.

Information kits should be made available to landlords, schools, long-term care facilities, hospitals, and public and private facilities such as hotels, motels, libraries, and so forth, that may be susceptible to Bed Bug infestations.

The public awareness campaign should include a wide use of online resources such as websites and social media.

An information hotline must also be created, where residents can call to report Bed Bug infestations or express any questions or concerns.

This province-wide public education and public awareness campaign, should contain consistent messaging across the Province, in clear, plain English, that the general public can easily understand.

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2. Scientific Base Line Study to Examine the Causes and Effects of Bed Bug Infestations in Ontario

The Province should establish a panel of experts, to determine what the safest and most effective practices are to control and prevent Bed Bug infestations, (i.e. examining the safety and effectiveness of various chemicals and strategies such as the use of heat and cold treatment), and the effectiveness of home remedies.

3. Review of Provincial Legislation

The Province should undertake a review of legislation, such as the Landlord and Tenant Act, the Municipal Licensing Act, Ontario Works Legislation, and the Occupational Health Act, to determine whether steps have to be taken to ensure that these Provincial Laws are compatible with the initiatives needed to combat Bed Bugs.

4. Focused Training of Public Service

The Province should ensure that relevant Public Servants are given the proper orientation and background in order to better deal with Bed Bug infestation, and how they can partner in providing solutions and proper protocols to prevent infestations throughout their Ministry or Agency.

5. Federal Government Action Required

The Federal Government needs to undertake a national overview in tracking the infestation of Bed Bugs across the country.

The Federal Government should examine the possibility of establishing new procedures, at various border crossings, to ensure that proper protocols and

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5. Federal Government Action Required (cont'd)

inspections are undertaken to stop the importation of Bed Bugs into Canada.

There needs to be an audit undertaken of possible sources of cross border infestation, such as the importation of used vehicles, furniture, and clothing.

While the more obvious vehicles (i.e. trucks delivering mattresses, furniture, and clothing) should be inspected, other delivery vehicles should also be inspected to ensure Bed Bugs are not being transported within vehicles (such as moving vans and used vehicles).

6. Partnership with Local Public Health Units

The Province should partner with local public health units, to track the existence of infestations throughout the Province.

The Province should also partner with local public health units, every Residential health and social service agency, public agencies in hospitals, hotels, motels, hostels, schools, long-term care facilities, and local Community Care Access Centres (CCAC's), to establish better training and awareness, and to establish better front line containment and prevention strategies in high risk areas.

7. Funding and Support for Non-Profit Housing Providers

The Province should undertake to provide funding and support for Housing Providers, in their efforts to contain and combat infestations in acute and serious cases, where immediate intervention is warranted.

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7. Funding and Support for Non-Profit Housing Providers (cont'd)

This intervention could be modeled in a pilot project that would replicate the Extreme Cleaning currently being practiced by some of the social service providers in the City of Toronto.

8. Comprehensive Strategy to Deal with our Most Vulnerable

A comprehensive strategy to deal with our most vulnerable residents should be established.

The Province needs to establish a series of strategies that will support vulnerable individuals that reside in assisted public housing that, through no fault of their own, have been infested with Bed Bugs and are unable to cope, due to a mental or physical disability, age, frailty, lack of financial resources, or lack of support to deal with the infestation.

There needs to be a coordinated strategy employed, that would include public health nurses, public health agencies, social service agencies (such as Woodgreen Community Services and St. Clair West Services for Seniors), to work hand in hand with public housing providers.

The Province should also find ways to fund treatment and cleaning of Bed Bugs for vulnerable and low-income residents.

There is a need for expert intensive case management to assist people in preparing homes for treatment, recovering from treatment, and avoiding repeat outbreaks. High Support Case Management for vulnerable individuals is required in order to attend to their needs.

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9. Need for Provincial Coordination

The Province (either through the Chief Medical Officer of Health, the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care, or the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing), needs to ensure that all government ministries and their resources are made available in this battle against Bed Bug infestation.

A designated office should provide coordination and information sharing for all parts of government that might be helpful in dealing with this challenge.

This central office could be established to focus on the immediate actions needed to contain this infestation, and to recommend long-term strategies, and long-term actions required to prevent and control Bed Bug infestation.

The designation of an individual (or individuals), to oversee this office and co-ordinate a provincial response is essential.

10. Establishment of a Private Sector “Roundtable Partnership”

The Province should help establish a private sector “Roundtable Partnership”, to see how the private sector might be able to support the local governments, and the Provincial Government, in their efforts to combat Bed Bugs.

The private sector might be asked to contribute support in providing products (i.e. mattress covers, discounted furniture, and vacuum cleaners) to those of low income, who are unable to deal with the high costs associated with Bed Bug Infestation.

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11. Establishment of an Expert Panel of Scientists

The Province should establish an expert panel of scientists from both within government and outside of government, to advise and support government scientists and public health experts who are engaged in Bed Bug infestation control, containment, and combat.

This panel needs to ensure there is a national and international intervention and best practices regime established for ongoing state of the art remedies.

12. Establishment of Best Practices for Pest Control

The Province, in cooperation with Pest Control experts, should determine the best method model for pest control protocols. There needs to be coordination, and an effort to work with pest control experts, to develop ongoing best practices (and the safest strategies), in dealing with infestations. Training, and possible certification of qualified individuals to deal with Bed Bugs is also recommended.

There needs to be an effort to eliminate delays and confusion in the approval of safe chemicals to fight Bed Bug infestation.

A full scale Integrated Pest Management System needs to be developed and shared with all professional pest management stakeholders.

13. Long-Term Sealing, Caulking, Scrubbing Program

There needs to be implementation of a long-term sealing, caulking, scrubbing program, that would be established as a possible standard for all Public Health Agencies, in cooperation with public housing providers and other residential housing providers

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14. Examination of Over the Counter Chemicals

Over the Counter sales of chemicals to the general public should be examined and evaluated for their safety and effectiveness.

15. Role for Our Schools in Expanding Awareness

All school boards should undertake a public awareness campaign through parents, teachers, and students, to educate them on the control and hazards of Bed Bug infestations.

16. Strategy for Seniors

There needs to be an organized outreach program undertaken by the Province, in cooperation with municipal authorities, that focuses on the special needs of our Seniors and the strategies that could be employed to help vulnerable seniors deal with Bed Bug infestations.

17. Review Building Code Guidelines and Procedures for New Construction and Renovations

Possible new building practices should be examined (especially for multi-resident homes), that would help in preventing future infestations. These practices should also be applied to building renovations, so that any renovations would be completed in a manner that would help prevent Bed Bug infestations from spreading (i.e. possible use of diatomaceous earth).

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18. Establish Best Practices for Waste Disposal Protocols

Best Practices for Waste Disposal Protocols should be established, especially in the case of items such as mattresses, used furniture, clothing, and toys. The General Public should be warned on the risks associated with bringing used items into their homes or places of employment, without proper cleaning and disinfection.

19. Used Goods Warnings

Clear, identifiable warnings need to be placed on household items (such as mattresses, furniture, toys, and clothing), which have been discarded because of Bed Bug infestation. Perhaps the use of a simple large orange “X” might be displayed.

20. Minimum Standard Benchmarks and Protocols for Schools

There should be minimum set of standards set in place, highlighting benchmarks in schools, day care centres, colleges and universities, in the identification, control, and methodology used in dealing with Bed Bug infestation.

Conclusion:

Thank you to all who attended the Bed Bug Summit at Queen's Park, and who made their most helpful contributions.

It is imperative that all sectors of society engage in a comprehensive and co-operative effort to fight Bed Bug infestation. The longer we delay in taking a leadership role, the more difficult and costly it will be to stem the spread of infestation, and the more severe the negative health and economic impacts of Bed Bugs will be on the people of Ontario.

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*If you would like additional information on these
recommendations or on the
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