



Help stop bed bugs

Bed bugs have become a problem in homes around the world, even in first-class hotels. They feed on human blood. They do **not** spread disease and are not a general health risk, but the stress from having them can cause insomnia and extreme anxiety that can affect quality of life.

Watch for signs of bed bugs:

- They leave dark, reddish-brown or black stains on mattresses, box springs, bedding, pillows, upholstered furniture, etc.
- When they're young, they are almost colourless and 1.3 millimetres long (nymphs or babies). Older bugs are rusty brown or dark red and are 6.3 millimetres long (adults).
- They're most often found in bedrooms but can be found all over your home if they are allowed to spread.
- They can't fly or jump, but they can crawl quite a distance through pipes and electrical wiring. This means it's hard to get rid of them when they get into apartments or condominium buildings.
- The adult bugs can live 12 to 18 months without feeding on blood.
- They bite mostly at night, generally several times in a row. The bites are usually painless so often you won't know you've been bitten until you see clusters of red welts or lumps. Sometimes people develop uncomfortable rashes and itching that indicate you've been exposed to bed bugs.



NOTE: Bed bugs are not a sign that your home isn't clean.

That's a myth. They do, however thrive in clutter, like stacks of paper or clothing.

It is hard to get rid of bed bugs, so it's best to try to keep them away in the first place. Here are some tips:

- Carefully check over any cloth items (ex: mattresses, furniture, stuffed animals, used clothing) you bring into your home for signs of bed bugs.
- If you find any bugs on bedding or clothing, etc., put anything that can be safely put into a clothes dryer on at **high heat for at least 30 minutes** to kill all stages of bed bug development.
- Seal off spaces around pipes, electrical outlets and baseboards to keep bed bugs out.
- Buy zippered mattress covers for your beds and tape the zippers with duct tape or buy a bed bug proof cover.
- De-clutter your home because bed bugs can hide in stacks of paper or clothing.

Bed bugs can hide in:

- mattress seams and creases, bed frames, box springs
- couch and chair cushions (cont'd)



To subscribe to Open Doors, order bulk copies, give us your comments, or get more information, call 945-2476 in Winnipeg, toll free 1-800-782-8403 or visit manitoba.ca/rtb



- behind baseboards, door frames
- between curtain folds
- drawers, radios, clocks, phones
- book and magazine covers

If you're travelling and staying in hotels or motels, keep your suitcases off the floor, use a luggage rack. If you see signs of bed bugs, tell the manager and find another place to stay if possible. When you come home, put all your clothing in a hot dryer and vacuum your suitcases. Then put the vacuum bag in a sealed plastic bag and get it out of the house, into a sealed garbage bin.

NOTE: If you see bed bugs in your rental unit, tell the landlord immediately and co-operate with the landlord and/or exterminator to get rid of them. Landlords are responsible for getting rid of pests, but tenants must prepare their units for treatment.

For more information about bed bugs, go to the Manitoba provincial website at www.gov.mb.ca/bedbugs. The branch has Fact Sheets on bed bugs available in the office or on our website.

Spring Clean Up

Windows

Tenants in single-family one-storey homes must clean the inside and outside of all windows.

Tenants in multi-level residential complexes must clean the inside glass and tracks of all windows.

Tenants must clean the outside of doors and windows that open onto a balcony.

Landlords of multi-level residential complexes must clean the outside of windows (including those on the main floor), except for balcony doors and windows. Landlords are responsible even if the windows are sliding windows.

Cleaning windows *once a year* is considered to be part of maintaining the appearance of any rental unit. Tenants do not have to live in a unit for a specific period of time before they can ask the landlord to clean the windows. If there is a disagreement, the landlord or tenant can ask the branch staff to decide if the tenant's request is reasonable.

Eaves troughs

Landlords are responsible for cleaning leaves or other debris from eaves troughs, to ensure that water can flow freely to downspouts.

Routine yard maintenance

Tenants who live in single-family dwellings are responsible for routine yard maintenance. This includes cutting grass, shovelling snow, weeding flowerbeds and gardens, trimming shrubs and controlling weeds in uncultivated areas.

Tenants who live in townhouses, duplexes or triplexes, and have exclusive use of the yard or part of the yard, are generally



responsible for routine yard maintenance for that part of the yard. A landlord and tenant may agree to other arrangements, under the terms of the tenancy agreement.

If there is no existing garden, tenants must get the landlord's permission before digging a garden.

Tenants are not responsible for major projects, such as tree cutting. They may be responsible for spraying trees for insects and treating lawns for bugs and weeds if the tenancy agreement covers it. If the tenancy agreement doesn't cover it, the landlord is responsible.

Landlords are responsible for routine yard maintenance in the common areas of multi-unit residential complexes.

When landlords and tenants disagree

People don't always agree with each other. That's just part of life. The good news is that many disagreements (or disputes) can be solved if we try to understand the other person's view.

Landlords and tenants can get into disputes because they don't agree on certain issues. Sometimes, they can work things out by talking to each other. If that doesn't work, they can ask the Residential Tenancies Branch to help.

Solving problems

If you are a tenant and have a concern with your landlord:

- Pull together all of the information you need (ex: repair details) before you talk to the landlord.
- Write down questions for the landlord and write down the answers the landlord gives you.
- Be very clear about what you want and when you would like it done.
- Ask how long it may take to get answers to your problem and check back to see how things are going.
- If the first person you talk to about your concern can't help you, ask to speak to someone else (for example, if

the building caretaker can't solve the problem, call the property management company).

If you are a landlord and have trouble collecting rent from a tenant, you must be clear about important details, such as:

- what will happen to tenants if they don't pay the rent (for example, will you give them a notice of termination)
- how much is owed, including any late fees and costs
- when rent must be paid (ex: on the first of the month)
- where to pay the rent (ex: drop box; caretaker's office)
- how to pay (ex: cash, cheque, credit card)

Work with the Residential Tenancies Branch (RTB)

The RTB helps landlords and tenants. When you tell the RTB staff about your problem, they can explain what the branch can do for you. Some problems can take a while to solve because everyone involved must give the details about their side of the problem in writing.

Protecting your privacy

The Personal Information Protection and Electronic Documents Act (PIPEDA) is a federal law to make sure businesses and organizations safely collect, use or give out personal information in their work. This law affects all Manitoba landlords.

Personal information can take any form (ex: written, spoken, recorded). It includes:

- age, name, ID number, income, ethnic background
- medical records
- height, weight, eye colour, social insurance number (SIN), birth date, photo
- financial or employment information
- employee files, credit records, information about disputes

Asking for Personal Information

Landlords must act responsibly when they get personal information from tenants and potential tenants. They must get permission to collect and use the information to decide on a tenant's application. Landlords must explain why they need certain information (ex: vehicle licence numbers for parking space assignment; work history to be sure tenant can pay rent). If there is no good reason to ask for certain information (ex: religion), tenants do not have to give it.

Handle with Care

Landlords must always protect tenants' personal information from others, though tenants may ask to see their own information at any time.

In some situations, landlords must give out a tenant's personal information (ex: police, emergencies). Even so, they must take care to release only the information needed.

When tenants move out

When a tenant moves out, the landlord must securely destroy (ex: shred) that person's personal information. The only information to be kept (ex: for two years) is the tenant's deposit information – just in case it's needed to prove payment. For more information about PIPEDA, call toll free 1-800-282-1376.

Some apartment buildings now have video surveillance cameras. Landlords often have a good reason to install these (ex: protect tenants and property).

Landlords, with video camera security systems, must:

- post signs saying video cameras are in place
- allow anyone photographed to see their photos, if they ask
- securely store tapes and equipment
- destroy recordings (ex: shred) when they are no longer needed



Rental Market Report

The 2010 Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation's latest issue of the *Rental Market Report* is available now. It shows vacancy rates in Manitoba for 2011. These rates are used to determine how much notice landlords need to give tenants when they terminate (end) tenancies for certain reasons.

If landlords end a tenancy because they are renovating, demolishing or changing the use of the unit or residential complex, they must give notice based on the vacancy rate. These are the current notice periods:

Area	Notice required
Winnipeg	5 months
Brandon	5 months
Thompson	5 months
Portage la Prairie	3 months
Steinbach	5 months
Manitoba average	5 months (for those areas outside of the city centres)

When the vacancy rate is less than three per cent, landlords who have month-to-month tenants must give them three months' notice if they sell the units and the buyers want to move in.

For more information on how much notice landlords need to give tenants to move, contact the Residential Tenancies Branch office nearest you; or go to our website: www.manitoba.ca/rtb and click on What's New.

Need information?

Online
manitoba.ca/rtb

Offline
in person or by phone

Visit your branch office Monday to Friday
from 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.

Winnipeg at 302-254 Edmonton Street
or call 945-2476

Brandon at 157-340 9th Street
or call 726-6230

Thompson at 113-59 Elizabeth Drive
or call 677-6496

Toll free 1-800-782-8403

Manitoba 

Publications Mail Agreement No. 40065629
Return Undeliverable Canadian Addresses to
Residential Tenancies Branch
c/o Unit 7 - 1715 St. James Street
Winnipeg, MB R3H 1H3