

# Questions to Ask if Bed Bugs Are Suspected (A Guide for HRE)

Bed bugs are a serious concern and should be addressed as quickly as possible to prevent the pests from spreading. With only one Physical Plant staff member able to respond to bed bug concerns it is imperative that false alarms be identified prior to submitting a work order. In order for Physical Plant to respond more effectively, we have developed some questions that should be asked of any resident/individual who claims that they may have bed bugs prior to submitting a work order to Physical Plant. These questions are designed to: 1. provide a more accurate account to determine if the symptoms indicate a true bed bug issue, 2. provide a more immediate response by physical plant for any true bed bug problems.

## General information regarding identifying bed bugs.

- Bites alone are not a good indicator of the presence of bed bugs because other bugs may cause similar reactions. Some people never even have a reaction to bed bug bites. Bites found under *certain* conditions can be informative in conjunction with other evidence.
- Other evidence that is usually present with bed bugs: Actual live bugs or bug skeletons around sleep area, red/rust/red-brown spots on the bedding, and/or an offensive sweet musty odor (typically present when there is a larger infestation occurring).
- Level of cleanliness and presence of other types of bugs is not an indicator of bed bugs.
- Bed bugs do not spontaneously appear, they are typically brought in by the occupant(s) from another location such as a hotel etc.
- If bed bugs are suspected, occupants should leave all bedding in place until after an investigation has been conducted by Environmental Health and Safety Officer in Physical Plant. Removing the bedding can prevent proper identification and potentially spread the bugs to other areas.

## Questions

**Do not ask these in a yes/no format. Be sure to let the occupant give you the information, do not provide examples to prevent you from leading the responses. Comments in Red are for your information.**

1. What makes you think you have bed bugs?
2. Have you been/slept elsewhere that you suspect may have had bed bugs?  
  
-If yes, what makes you suspect bed bugs?
3. Have you traveled recently and if so, where?
4. Have you seen any insects in or around where you sleep? Mattress crevasses, under the bed, and amongst sheets and blankets are common.  
  
-If yes:  
  
Please describe the insect? **If the description is similar to a bedbug, see if they can capture (preferred) or take a picture of the insect.**
5. Have you seen any strange small spots or stains on your sheets? **Bed bugs will typically leave dark/rusty colored droppings or blood stains on bedding, may see crushed bugs, live bugs, eggs, or casings in sheets and/or around and in crevices of the mattress around the headboard where adult bugs like to hide.**
6. Are you being bitten?  
  
-If yes:  
  
When are you being bitten?  
  
Where and is there a pattern to the bites? **Typically see a cluster of bites that all appear at the same time.**  
  
What is the pattern? **Have them describe where and the pattern, take a picture if possible.**

7. Have you noticed any new/odd odors around your bed?

-If yes, please describe the odor?

8. Do you have a roommate?

-If yes, is your roommate experiencing any similar symptoms?