

## Bed Bug Protocol

Bed bugs are being found everywhere these days; from homes, hospitals, and hotels to theaters, restaurants, churches, and ... alas, libraries. If you find a bed bug in the library or in library materials, you need to take action. These little critters seldom travel alone so if you see one, you want to be ready to deal with the possibility that others have traveled into the library. Below are some ideas of where to start to handle this pesky problem.

1. Contact your local pest control company to come and inspect your building. Many libraries are using bed bug-sniffing dogs to scan the library at least quarterly to locate areas in the library that may have bed bugs. And, pest control companies have developed treatment techniques to address the issue of bed bugs
2. If the bug is found on furniture, remove the item from the building until it is treated and found to be bug-free. Discard the item if it is seriously infested and cannot be treated successfully.
  - When buying new furniture, consider replacing upholstered furniture with non-fabric pieces.
3. Train staff to inspect returned materials for bugs. Your pest control company may provide training on how to identify the bed bug and where to routinely look for signs of them in your library. In general, some precautions include:
  - If bed bugs are found, quarantine the material by putting it in a sealed, plastic bag until it can be treated.
  - If the damage is extensive, you may want to just discard the item.
  - Many libraries have “ovens” in which they bake the materials to kill the pest because it takes a temperature of 120 degrees Fahrenheit for at least an hour to kill bed bugs, their larva and eggs. There may be many useful products to help with this, but some libraries have had success with [Pack-Tite](#) ovens. Another Website with many useful products to address bed bug prevention and treatment is: <http://www.usbedbugs.com/>. NOTE: This is not an endorsement of either company or Website.
  - Don't forget to inspect those green ILL bags. Bed bugs are known to hitchhike on anything that has a place where they can hide – like seams of bags.
4. Consider placing an inexpensive monitor in your book drop that can detect bedbugs to help prevent their spread.
5. Create a procedure for handling materials and a policy on how to handle patrons who are bringing bugs (any type) into the library. It is important to balance the rights of a patron to use the library while ensuring the protection of the library materials, facility, staff and library visitors. It is not too extreme to consider suspending privileges of patrons who are known to be returning infested items or carrying the pests in with them on their clothing or personal items.
  - If you plan to suspend library privileges until the patron can prove that they no longer have an infestation, you may want to provide them with information on how to accomplish this.
  - You can provide them with a brochure based on the one available from the NKY Health Department. Here's their link to their page with a brochure and more information: <http://www.nkyhealth.org/Current-Programs/Bed-Bug-Fact-Sheet.aspx>.
  - Another helpful document is available from the UK Extension Service on Bed Bugs at: <http://www2.ca.uky.edu/entomology/entfacts/ef636.asp>.

Julia Allegrini, Branch Manager at Kenton County Public Library, provided a session at the 2012 KPLA Conference on dealing with bed bugs and other unpleasant things we don't want in our libraries. Here's a sample procedure from her on how KCPL deals with bed bugs:

I have referred librarians specifically to talk with their legal counsel. We have a progressive discipline procedure where we do the following for any bugs: bed bugs, fleas, and roaches are the primary culprits, occasionally ants. We did run it by our legal counsel. Of note, this applies to staff as well as patrons – though we do not suspend staff and are more likely to help them with seeking treatment and understanding the issue.

- For first time offenses, staff must:
  - Talk with the patron about what we found in the books/materials. And put a note in the ILS record.
  - Show them the materials and bugs in them whenever possible.
  - Treat items if possible.
  - Suggest ways they can address the issue, giving at least 2 solutions (e.g. keep materials in closed containers at all times when not being used, inspect them before return, talk with landlord or management if they live in a congregate living facility etc.).
  - Give them potential consequences.
    - If it happens again your borrowing privileges may be suspended until you can demonstrate that you have had your area treated.
- For second time offenses, staff must:
  - Tell the patron it happened again.
  - Put a note in ILS record.
  - Show them the materials and bugs whenever possible.
  - Treat items if possible.
  - Tell them if it happens again their borrowing privileges will be suspended.
  - Discuss treatment options for keeping materials bug free.
- Third time offenses:
  - Suspend borrowing privileges.
  - Specify what counts as treatment (management notice of treatment, bill from exterminator, receipt and empty container of treatment for self-treatment, one patron actually moved).

What we haven't done is say we will charge people for items we can't save.

For patrons who come to the library with bugs on their person or belongings, the procedure is the same: warn them, give them suggestions, tell them again and then suspend them until they can prove treatment.

Julia also says: I did a presentation for KPLA this year and am more than happy to talk with anybody: staff, board, etc. who have questions. If you want to talk with Julia directly, you can call her at (859) 962-4074 or send an e-mail to [Julia.Allegrini@kentonlibrary.org](mailto:Julia.Allegrini@kentonlibrary.org).

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An additional sample policy from another library, included below, demonstrates the different policies and procedures that can be adopted to address this issue.

**Bed Bugs/Insects**  
Created 30 Mar 2012  
Revised 30 Mar 2012  
Reviewed 30 Mar 2012

When a bed bug/insect is discovered, do not discuss the subject with the patron who returned the materials. Simply add a note to the patron's account documenting the insect(s) and the materials affected. The Branch Manager should be notified if there is more than one bed bug/insect incident for a patron. The Branch Manager will speak to the patron.

When bed bugs/insects are present on and/or in library materials or furniture, try to preserve the insect body as best as possible. The incident should be recorded in the incident log for the exterminator. The insect body should be placed with the log and, if possible, can be taped onto a page of the log. Keeping the insect body and tracking the incident(s) will help the Facilities Specialist and the exterminator know what infestation(s) there may be and how frequently the insects are appearing.

Handling of infested books:

- Place book(s) in Ziploc bags;
- Spray the book(s) with bed bug spray;
- Seal the bag and place in designated storage;
- The Branch Manager will withdraw the book(s) from the collection;
- Dispose of sealed bag containing book(s).

Handling of infested CD/DVD materials:

- Remove discs from case(s);
- Remove the slip cover (sheet with title information) if possible and if it is not infested;
- Place case(s) in Ziploc bags;
- Spray the case(s) with bed bug spray;
- Seal and dispose of the bag;
- Place discs and artwork in new case(s).

Notify the Facilities Specialist when bed bugs or other insects are detected in furniture. The Facilities Specialist will treat the infested furniture. The infested furniture will be removed from the public space. Once the infestation is gone, the Facilities Specialist will return the furniture to the public space.

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This document is a "work in progress" and so if you have additional information that could help your colleagues deal with bed bug (or any bug) issues, please feel free to share your policies, procedures, product and vendor information, and general advice.