

TENANT RIGHTS IN ONTARIO REGARDING BED BUGS

WHO IS RESPONSIBLE WHEN A BED BUG INFESTATION IS DISCOVERED IN MY APARTMENT?

If you have a problem with bed bugs or other insects or pests, you should immediately inform your landlord, your superintendent or property manager, or someone else who is responsible for ensuring homes are pest-free. As a tenant, you are responsible for cooperating with your landlord's efforts to control bed bugs. It is the landlord's responsibility to maintain the rental unit so that it is fit for habitation and complies with health standards.

WHEN CAN THE LANDLORD ENTER TO INSPECT MY APARTMENT?

Landlords have the right to enter to inspect and maintain rental units. Tenants must be given notice in writing 24 hours ahead of time. Treating an apartment for bed bugs is not considered an emergency, so your landlord should give you proper notice and adequate time to properly prepare your unit before application of pesticide.

WHAT IS THE BEST SOLUTION TO CONTROLLING BED BUGS?

Early detection and fast action is important to addressing an infestation. Only licensed pest control companies should be used. If the job is not done properly, the bed bugs may come back or continue to spread.

WHAT IF OTHER UNITS HAVE BED BUGS? DO ALL TENANTS HAVE TO CO-OPERATE?

If the pest control operator believes there is a need to also treat neighbouring units, your landlord may have the right to enter to inspect and treat your apartment as well as the affected apartment.

WHAT IF YOU CANNOT PROPERLY PREPARE YOUR APARTMENT FOR TREATMENT OF THE BUGS?

Proper preparation is key to successful treatment and prevention of bed bugs. Landlords should tell you what you need to do in order to make treatment effective. Be prepared. This can take a lot of work, including clearing out shelves, laundering all clothing and bedding, moving furniture away from walls and removing clutter.

It is every tenant's responsibility to make sure they properly prepare the apartment according to the landlord's instructions. If you are unable to do this or have questions, make sure you speak to your landlord about it right away. Family members, friends, neighbours or community members may be able to provide additional support with the preparations.

Landlords can apply to Ontario's Landlord and Tenant Board for an order to evict a tenant if a tenant seriously and unreasonably interferes with the landlord's efforts to deal with bed bugs.

WHO PAYS FOR PEST CONTROL COSTS?

Landlords are responsible for the costs for treatment.

WHAT IF YOUR LANDLORD FAILS TO TAKE ACTION?

If a landlord refuses to help when a tenant notifies them of a bed bug problem, tenants may obtain assistance or advice from a legal clinic or from the Landlord and Tenant Board.

Another option available to tenants whose landlord does not maintain their building properly is to file an application about maintenance with Ontario's Landlord and Tenant Board (LTB). If the Board finds that the building or unit is not maintained adequately, there are several remedies that can be ordered. These include an abatement of rent, an order requiring the landlord to conduct the necessary repairs, or a rent freeze until the problems are resolved. If you are interested in filing an application with the LTB, you can contact the Board by telephone at 1-888-332-3234 toll-free (416-645-8080 in the Toronto area), or visit its website at www.ltb.gov.on.ca.