Bed bugs

Given their rapid proliferation without proper treatment, bed bugs have become a serious topic of concern for the apartment industry. While bedbugs do not transmit disease, infestations have been known to cause consternation among those affected. Without the cooperation of residents, bedbug infestations can result in significant financial and administrative burdens for apartment owners, operators, and their staffs, causing property loss, expense, and inconvenience.¹

A number of states do not clearly define resident responsibilities in the prevention or treatment of bedbugs in apartment communities. Given bed bugs are introduced to apartments by residents, any legislation concerning bedbugs must properly balance the responsibility for preventive action and eradication costs between residents and owners.

Owners and managers of rental housing face a number of challenges associated with addressing bed bug infestations, including increased operational costs and resident non-compliance with inspection and treatment protocols. Policymakers should consider that contamination may spread to neighboring units if residents fail to comply. While pest management professionals offer cost-effective treatment methods, such as heat treatments, these costs can add up and put an unexpected strain on an owner or management firm’s operating budget, particularly small businesses. Furthermore, policies addressing bedbug infestations and remediation should be outlined under landlord-tenant laws, instead of health codes, as bed bugs do not transmit disease.

NAA Viewpoint

Legislation governing bedbugs should properly balance responsibility for their control and remediation between property owners and residents. Residents should be expected to communicate the presence of bedbugs to the property owner or management and allow for access to their units for the purposes of inspection and remediation actions.

¹ [https://www.cdc.gov/parasites/bedbugs/index.html](https://www.cdc.gov/parasites/bedbugs/index.html)