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# Choosing a Pest Management Professional (PMP) to Treat Bed Bugs in Your Home

This brochure lists some of the most important questions that a home owner or business owner should ask when choosing a pest management company to treat their property for bed bugs. Each pest management professional's answers may vary, but their answers should be similar to the responses in this brochure.

Some companies offer alternative treatments, such as heat treatment, which can be effective.

Always contact at least three companies to ask for estimates, and to evaluate their responses to the questions in this brochure.

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## Questions to Ask:

### **Does your company treat for bed bugs?**

Some exterminators don't treat for bed bugs. Also, bed bug eradication requires considerable experience and knowledge.

### **How long have you been doing bed bug extermination?**

The longer a company has been in the business of killing bed bugs, the more expert they typically become.

### **Are you licensed by the Ohio Department of Agriculture?**

PMPs MUST carry a valid pesticide applicators license from the Ohio Department of Agriculture. You can check the status of their license by calling 1-800-282-1955, extension 31, or you can find them online at: [www.agri.ohio.gov](http://www.agri.ohio.gov). Never use an unlicensed applicator!

### **Can you provide references?**

They should answer, "Yes." Don't hesitate to contact two or three of the references.

### **How much will the treatment costs?**

Some companies charge an inspection fee, but others do not. The cost of the first treatment and follow-up treatments may vary, but are likely to be in the \$200 to \$500 range.

### **Will you provide an estimate?**

Most companies will provide you with an estimate.

### **How long will it take to get rid of the bed bugs?**

A single treatment rarely, if ever, eliminates bed bugs. Most homes require three or four treatments, and more may be needed if the infestation is severe. The home should be retreated within seven to 14 days. Anything beyond 14 days is too long.



### **Should I throw away my furniture?**

The pest management applicator should tell you to keep your furniture until they have inspected it, and determined whether or not they can treat it. If the PMP cannot treat a piece of furniture, do not remove it unless it is sealed in plastic to keep the bugs from being spread. Anything that you throw away must be completely destroyed, so that someone doesn't take it.

### **How will you treat my home?**

An in-depth inspection is the first step to determine where the bed bugs are hiding. Treatment will involve using various chemicals on the bed, baseboards, light switches, etc. to kill the bed bugs. The technician should be able to explain exactly how your home will be treated.

### **What will you use to treat my home?**

There are many different chemicals that are used for bed bug treatment. Some of the common ones are: Suspend SC, Bedlam, Phantom, Steri-fab, Deltadust, Gentrol, and Eiatomaceous Earth. PMPs usually use several different insecticides and formulations when treating for bed bugs.

### **Do you rotate the chemicals?**

Bed bugs are becoming resistant to some of the commonly used chemicals. It is best not to continue to use the same insecticide(s), but to rotate the chemicals that are used.

### **Will you treat my whole house (or business)?**

The extent of the treatment will depend on the severity of the infestation. If the bed bugs are confined to one or two rooms, it may not be necessary to treat the whole house.

### **What about my neighbor's apartments?**

It is always important to inspect any adjoining units since bed bugs are active insects that can move through cracks and gaps in the walls. The tenants and the property manager have to cooperate with the PMP to accomplish this.

### **How do I prepare for treatment?**

The PMP should give you a detailed list of things to do to prepare your home for treatment. Removing clutter is a critical step in preparing for treatment.