



Sequoia Insurance Company

RISK ALERT

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Bed Bug Awareness: Tips for Travelers

Bed bugs are spread primarily by travelers who unwittingly carry the pests on their luggage and clothing. Follow these tips to protect yourself while traveling and to avoid taking bed bugs home.

Get Recommendations

Before you make hotel or resort reservations:

- Get recommendations from family, friends, and colleagues.
- Check online reviews, where previous guests may have reported bed bug problems. But be aware that a single report does not mean that a problem still exists at the facility in question.

Conduct Your Own Inspection

When you check into your hotel room, look for signs of bed bugs. Look for tiny black or reddish fecal spots (excrement of dried blood); live or dead bugs; and translucent bug skins. Also be on the alert for powders or dried sprays, signs that the room has been treated (or is in the process of being treated).

Here's where to look:

- *Bed* – Pull back the spread to inspect the bedding, mattress, box spring, headboard, legs, and frame. Check seams, pleats, folds, crevices, mattress tags, etc. In particular, check areas where the bed touches the wall.
- *Bedside table* – Look inside and under the drawers, under the lamp and phone, and on the side of the table next to the bed. Look on the table legs and under the table.
- *Upholstered furniture* – Check between and under chair and sofa cushions, where bed bugs often hide (especially on sleeper sofas).
- *Carpets* – Inspect carpet edges and carpet areas under furniture legs.

If evidence of bed bugs is present, request a clean room, and be sure that the desk clerk informs the hotel management.

Repeat the inspection in the new room. If you cannot secure a clean room, ask for a full refund and seek a different lodging.

During Your Stay

Protect your luggage and clothing from infestation. During your stay, keep your luggage:

- In the room's center, away from the bed and other furniture, walls, and corners.
- On an uncarpeted area, and raised off the floor on a luggage stand (but inspect the stand first).
- Hang clothes in the closet; do not lay clothing on the bed or furniture.

When You Check Out

- If possible, launder your clothing with hot water and detergent, followed by machine drying, before you pack. (The hotel may provide a laundry service.) Seal clean items in plastic bags before packing them.
- As you pack, check every item of clothing and every piece of luggage for infestation. In particular, check soft-sided luggage, tote bags, shoes, and back packs; their soft fabrics and numerous crevices are ideal hiding places.
- If you find any signs of bed bugs on your possessions, inform hotel management and ask for assistance in cleaning, discarding, and/or sealing the item(s).

When You Unpack at Home

- Leave your luggage outside or in the garage until it can be inspected, emptied, and cleaned.
- If you find even the least sign of bed bugs, launder your clothing in hot water and detergent, and dry in the clothes dryer to kill bugs and their eggs.
- Remember that eggs are so small as to be nearly invisible. Use a magnifying glass.
- Clean your luggage outdoors, using a stiff brush. Vacuum each item thoroughly.
- If a serious infestation has occurred, consult a licensed pest control professional.
- It may be necessary to discard badly infested luggage or clothing.