

Bed bug preparation and too much stuff

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One of the most significant impediments to successful bed bug work in apartments is stuff. At times, people simply have more stuff than can be stored orderly in their residence. And we're not just talking about hoarders. Over time, most people will accumulate belongings of varying degree of value. It's a problem that must be dealt with to thoroughly inspect and treat for bed bugs successfully.

Many pest companies provide their customers a pretreatment checklist, which instructs residents how to prepare for treatment. Some of these instructions are written well; others aren't. It's not uncommon to receive calls from consumers with questions about these instructions. We advise all professionals to review their checklist instructions to ensure they're clear, understandable and well written.

The square footage of an apartment, for example, is fixed. Depending on one's perspective, it might seem to shrink when dealing with bed bug preparation and treatment. One wonders where all the stuff is supposed to go, and it seems customers wrestle with available storage daily. Even after many items have been thrown away, space is still limited. In some cases, customers might face a significant amount of preparation work. Many might be unable to complete all the work without suitable assistance. While some folks are physically unable to do the work, others simply don't have the time. Still others just don't do things the way they should. But such circumstances need not be an all-is-lost situation.

Pest management professionals (PMPs) can work with customers to eliminate bed bug problems despite the logistical difficulties. Overall, excessive clutter presents a significant obstacle to treatment and can provide pests with inaccessible harborage. Such clutter should be suitably addressed as needed. Customers can use plastic bags and storage bins in which to seal items



Storage issues and uncooperative customers often can complicate bed bug treatments.

to keep bed bugs in or out. Experienced PMPs bring a supply of plastic trash bags to each job just in case. When space is tight, such stored items will need to be moved during treatment.

When working in customers' homes, PMPs incorporate various skill sets, including packer and mover. Moving furniture and personal property is necessary when inspecting and treating. However, the volume or amount of such moving might become an issue when an extraordinary amount of moving is required. How such additional tasks are melded into the job might be handled differently, but it's clear such tasks are necessary.

Most customers won't prepare 100-percent correctly despite provided instructions. Still, the bed bug treatment needs to be done, and time is a significant factor when conducting service work at remote locations. **PMP**

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