**Prevention or Reaction?**

**June/July Rental Review Submission SDMHA (South Dakota Multi-Housing Association)**

How many of you have had questions or complaints about bedbugs? I would imagine – if you are being honest, the answer is a few (at least)!

It is a hot topic, people are very much concerned about where they are, how not to get them, how to get rid of them, what is this bite etc… It is very important to be educated on the ins and outs of bedbugs in order to represent your business and mission appropriately and make wise decisions on your actions.

We all have heard the saying, “an ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure” – there is a reason that is a timeless saying. It is ALWAYS less costly and less stressful to employ preventative measures in every aspect of life. Bedbug control is no exception! We know that bedbugs are a reality in our world, the multi housing and travel industries are among the 2 industries with the highest risk. Why, because they can hitchhike on clothes or belongings from other locations….other homes, movie theaters, dorms, restaurants, airlines etc. They can be anywhere and can find their way into your properties. The question is – what do you do if they do show up? More importantly – what plan do you have in place to make sure they do not???

The most important and least expensive step in any control program is education! KNOW THIS:

* Know that they are real!
* Know that they can and will show up in any number of places!
* Know that they are just a bug….if you know where they are, you can get rid of them!

Inspecting a unit for bedbugs before they are a problem is relatively easy and can locate a problem early on before they may have time to establish themselves and damage your investment as well as you and your tenant’s property. These routine inspections can take as little as 15 minutes to employ and may protect you from missing something big!

Most businesses have not solidified a resource for funding bedbug remediation efforts. So they cross their fingers and hope for the best. That is a gamble that could be a very costly mistake! As you look into your end of the year planning, look at your budgets and make some decisions on what you need to do to ensure your tenants and employees have a safe and healthy environment to live in and to work in. If you get a complaint or report of bedbugs, you may already be into it deep! If a population has established itself and migration has occurred – it may be the first you have heard about it, but may be a problem in more than one unit. Odds are – your tenants are not all going to report such activity for fear of eviction, judgment, fines or costs associated with extermination. Is an established population, that could have been located early on, a risk you can afford to make?

As you can imagine, a preventative plan costs far less than a reactive one. I imagine you have all been exposed to pricing for extermination efforts, chemical, heat etc. Lastly, once a problem exists you are counting on the tenant to be diligent in maintaining control…is this always going to happen?

* Know your budget
* Know what needs to be done and make a plan!

Bo “nose” what he would do? Ask him!!!

REVISED DOCUMENT

Prevention or Reaction?

Have you had questions or complaints from your tenants about bedbugs? I would imagine, if you are being honesT, the answer is unfortunately “yes”.

It is a hot topic, and people are concerned about where they are, what their bite it like, how to keep them out, and how to get rid of them. Are you prepared to answer these questions? If not, you are not alone. There is quite a lot of misinformation out there right now, and in most cases, this information is making a bad situation even worse. For example, this past week a rental tenant called us because she was convinced she had bedbugs in her apartment unit. During the course of the conversation she indicated she was told bedbugs would only bite you while you’re sleeping. Based on this information, she had been forcing herself to stay awake through the night for several days in a row. She was now completely exhausted and riddled with bites. As a landlord or property manager, you are being forced to make many decisions related to these issues, and it may seem the answer to all those starts with a dollar sign. The most critical of these decisions is whether or not to spend the bulk of your money on prevention or reaction. Once this strategic decision is made, many of the tactical decisions become clear.

Reaction

The attraction to reactive strategy is obvious. In this strategy, you only incur a cost, if you have a problem. Oftentimes this is the default strategy a new situation arises and a business does not have a line in its budget to manage.

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