

An IPM approach to tackling bed bugs

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Bed bug infestations are one of the most challenging pest problems to tackle. They're hard to find, persistent, inconvenient, are increasingly pervasive and require considerable professional expertise and cooperation from clients to eliminate. PMPs dealing with this very opportunistic insect are always looking for the best ways to eliminate bed bug infestations for clients.

Integrated Pest Management (IPM) programs are an effective way to eradicate and keep bed bugs under control. For Ace Exterminating, using an IPM program incorporating the SmartSolution for bed bugs from BASF Pest Control Solutions, and a highly-trained staff, the company was able to keep bed bugs at bay in a middle Tennessee nursing home.

IPM Approach

For Tim Jackson, Pest Control Supervisor with Ace Exterminating, treating his customer's bed bug infestation required the full IPM approach: inspection, prescription, communication, treatment and follow up.

Inspection

Working with nursing home management, Jackson's team completed a thorough inspection of the facility noting all accessible harborage and areas where bed bugs may have traveled to.

"We lifted mattresses to find hundreds of bed bugs - it was the worst infestation I have seen in 15 years of pest control work. What was unique about the situation was the number of bed bugs that were confined to small areas, moving freely within these areas undisturbed," Jackson said.

Communication

Unfortunately, because bed bugs are common in multi-person living arrangements like nursing homes, the infestation came as no surprise to management. Management contacted Ace as soon as the infestation was detected in order to protect its residents and staff. For Ace, involving management in the discussion was an important part of the treatment plan.

While the nursing home staff was familiar with addressing problems like these, Ace still provided an information sheet for staff and residents so everyone understood the treatment plan and role they played in executing that plan. It included specific direction on sealing off rooms, bagging and hot-water washing all linens and cloth items and information on the treatment.

“There is no easy way to prepare our customers for bed bug treatments. It’s always going to be somewhat of an inconvenience. However, by setting expectations early on in the process, we find it’s easier for everyone involved,” Jackson said.

Prescription and Treatment

Utilizing BASF Pest Control Solutions SmartSolution for bed bugs, Jackson employed the Prescription Treatment® IPM approach. His team started by treating mattress and box spring seams and crevices with Prescription Treatment brand Phantom® pressurized insecticide followed by a Prescription Treatment brand Alpine™ dust insecticide application on all removed electrical plate covers and wall voids. Jackson’s team dusted under carpet, around wall edges and under all baseboards in the facility.

The third element of the treatment was using Phantom® termiticide-insecticide to treat all bed frames, headboards, nightstands and any other furniture in the rooms. The crew then used Phantom pressurized insecticide for the cracks and crevices of furniture and treated all baseboard areas, ceiling edges, screw holes in walls and any area where bed bugs were or could infest.

Follow Up

Prior to leaving the site, Ace Exterminating inspected to ensure all areas were treated. Within 14 days of the initial treatment, Ace returned to the site twice to follow up and will remain in contact with the customer to ensure the facility is free of bed bugs for the long haul.

Training and Education

Ace Exterminating is one of the leading pest control companies in middle Tennessee, especially when it comes to treating bed bug infestations. Not only does the company approach each situation using core IPM practices, the company trains its staff on new products and treatment options using resources provided by manufacturers like BASF Pest Control Solutions.

“With the help of our sales representative, Nick Iverson, we’ve offered training in our office on two occasions,” Jackson said. “His expertise has been instrumental in establishing Ace as a leader in the bed bug treatment industry in middle Tennessee and has helped our company stay ahead of the competition with regard to treating bed bugs.”

“Bed bug problems are only going to get worse across the country,” Jackson said. “Now is the time for pest management professionals to learn all they can about bed bug control solutions and capitalize on this significant business opportunity.”

Users must always read and follow label directions.

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