

DEP URGES SAFETY IN BATTLE AGAINST BED BUGS

(10/P100)TRENTON- An alarming resurgence in bed bugs is causing many New Jersey residents to seek quick and deadly means to eradicate the pesky and persistent creatures. Towards that goal, and with an eye on safety, Department of Environmental Protection Commissioner Bob Martin is urging residents and pest control experts to use only registered pesticides and utilize good housekeeping practices to control the troubling insects.

The DEP is advising the hiring of licensed pest control companies to battle bed bugs. But if that is too costly or you can't wait to deal with the issue, use only federal - and state-registered pesticide products to control bed bugs, and follow label directions explicitly to avoid risks to yourself and others. "It's a matter of public health," said Commissioner Martin. "There are effective ways to deal with this growing problem while not jeopardizing the health of yourself and loved ones. Choose carefully in deciding how to deal with this issue. It's most important to do it safely."

Bed bugs are small, flat insects that feed on the blood of sleeping people and animals, according to the federal centers for Disease Control and Prevention. They are reddish in color, wingless, and range from one to seven millimeters in length. They can live for several months without a blood meal. Bed bugs are experts at hiding, finding refuge in places such as the seams of mattresses, bed frames, headboards, box springs, dressers, behind wallpaper and in or under any clutter or objects near a bed.

Eliminating bed bugs can be difficult but not impossible if done properly, according to DEP experts. Hiring a New Jersey licensed pest control professional can increase the likelihood of speeding up success in eliminating bed bugs. The alternative is a home-applied chemical pesticide treatment.

Pesticides alone, however, will not likely solve your bed bug problems. Eradicating the bugs requires an Integrated Pest Management approach. First, confirm the presence of bed bugs by inspecting rooms thoroughly, with a particular focus on the bedroom. Look for signs of bed bugs, for possible hiding places and for openings that would allow them to enter the home. Then clean and get rid of clutter to eliminate their shelter.

Consider a variety of removal methods that best fits your situation, including, vacuuming; employing intense heat or extreme cold on temperature-sensitive bed bugs, such as putting bedding into a hot clothes dryer for 20 minutes, steam cleaning or freezing bedding or clothing; and make any repairs needed to prevent future bed bug invasions. Also, remember that bed bugs travel. They are found in places that experience high volumes of overnight guests, such as hotel rooms and dormitories. Be sure to check your room when you arrive and your luggage or souvenirs before you leave so you don't carry bed bugs home. "Most important, if you suspect you have a problem with bed bugs, there is no need to panic," said Marcedius Jameson, Administrator of the DEP Pesticide Control Division. "Eliminating bed bugs may be difficult but it's not impossible. There are effective ways to deal with them if you are persistent."

For assistance in choosing an indoor pesticide, check with the New Jersey Cooperative Extension Service office in your county:
<http://njaes.rutgers.edu/county>

Information on licensed pest control professionals in New Jersey:
<http://www.nj.gov/dep/enforcement/pcp/bpo-busappl.htm>

Detailed information on how to deal with bed bugs:
<http://www.epa.gov/pesticides/bedbugs/>

Detailed information on bed bugs from the federal Centers for Disease Control and Prevention: http://www.cdc.gov/nceh/ehs/Publications/Bed_Bugs_CDC-EPA_Statement.htm

