

## **Integrated Pest Management Program**

Integrated Pest Management (IPM) is an eight step approach as outlined below.

1. The first step in IPM is planning. The landlord and tenant(s) need to set a threshold for bed bugs before an infestation occurs. It is recommended to have a set plan with clear goals and to share the plan with others. This is to encourage quick and timely reporting of problems. If a problem is not addressed quickly, it can spread throughout the facility.
2. The second step is to educate everyone. Landlords and building managers should seek to better educate residents and staff about how to prevent and identify bed bugs. Education can be done with the assistance of MLHU staff and/or pest management companies.

The Health Promoter has been in the community attending events, housing complexes and workplaces. Useful giveaways such as message pens and bed bug monitor boards are distributed at these locations and also by the contracted pest control operator. The pens have six printed messages on them as well as website and phone contact information for easy reference. The bed bug detection boards are a simple way for people who want to monitor their home for bed bug activity. Bed bug information was also distributed to the Ontario Works recipients in Middlesex County.

Through the CBBWG, an educational partnership has been formed with the London Middlesex Housing Corporation (LMHC). The Health Promoter went to a large portion of the LMHC buildings in the city and also in the county. The Health Unit presented information about bed bugs including; where and how to find them and how to prevent bringing them into our homes. LMHC covered the reporting process that tenants can follow and what the treatment schedule is. The tenants were also informed about the supports LMHC offers to make preparation easier, such as clear and black garbage bags and assessing them for possible preparation help through their own funding. Attached as Appendix E are two charts. One lists community events and workplaces for which the Health Promoter has conducted educational sessions and one containing only information about the LMHC educational visits. The talks were very well received and tenants are taking an active role in finding out how to prevent bed bugs from coming into their homes.

3. Identification is the third IPM step. There needs to be confirmation the pest in question is actually a bed bug. They can be misidentified as cockroaches, or other pests. Specimens can be identified by the MLHU Entomologist if required. Bed bugs do leave signs such as, fecal droppings, casings and bites on the resident which can assist in confirming their presence.
4. Inspecting is the fourth step and includes inspection of all premises where pest infestations are suspected or where there is potential for an infestation. The resident of the unit or home is responsible for the initial inspection and notifying the landlord. A thorough inspection should be done with the pest control company when signs have been found in a residence. Because bed bugs can spread to different rooms, it is important to have adjacent units to the suspect unit inspected. This is often the policy of the pest company. A tenant living in a suspect unit

cannot refuse the entry of the landlord and pest company if they have been given a written notice of 24 hours prior to the appointment.

5. The fifth step in IPM also places emphasis on the importance of the tenant and landlord to keep records of any correspondence relevant to the pest situation. Tenants are required to inform their landlord in writing and give the landlord adequate time to respond to their needs. Copies of the letter should be kept by both parties. This letter verifies the date which the complaint from the resident was received by the landlord and the unit where the issue is suspected. The tenant then needs to keep track of each landlord response, the date of the first inspection and the results of the inspection. This will include; what was found – a confirmation of bed bugs – classification level of the infestation is either, high, medium or low.

During the treatment process the pest company will also make notes in the report about how well the unit was prepared for the treatment. If a unit is consistently not well prepared for the treatments, the landlord can argue to the Landlord Tenant Board that the tenant is not being cooperative in their efforts. The tenant should also inquire about the pest management strategies that were used and the landlord should provide the tenant with a treatment timeline.

6. The sixth step in the IPM program is unit preparation for treatment, which is done by the tenant. When a pest management company confirms the presence of bed bug, often a written list of preparation requirements is left with the tenant. These guidelines are also available through the Health Unit. It is the responsibility of the tenants(s) to follow that list to the best of their ability to ensure an effective treatment can be completed.

MLHU staff is available to provide step by step direction and instructions on how to prepare an apartment. The preparation process includes, but is not limited to; the reduction of clutter, separation of infested items from non-infested items using labeled garbage bags, vacuuming, removing electrical covers and moving furniture away from the walls. Because this is a very important step in the pest management process, \$70,000 of the MOHLTC approved funding has been dedicated to providing preparation services to populations who are physically or mentally unable to do the work themselves.

These recipients are identified through the CBBWG and calls to the Bed Bug Hotline. The Health Promoter receives the initial call and collects information on the nature of the bed bug infestation in the unit. If the caller identifies as a tenant who is considered a member of a vulnerable population with little or no support, they are referred to a Public Health Inspector (PHI) for an inspection. If the inspection confirms there is a bed bug infestation, a decision is made as to whether or not there is need for preparation assistance based on severity of the infestation and ability of the tenant. A pest management company also undertakes an assessment to classify the level of infestation and amount of preparation work needed. Again, education is provided to both parties (landlord and tenant) along with preparation help to ensure the treatment will be effective. Preparation assistance is only provided when there is agreement and confirmation by the landlord that professional treatment will be provided. There may also be logistical concerns to be coordinated, such as the finding an appropriate day for preparation and treatment to occur, and the support services which may be necessary when the tenant is required to vacate the premise for four to six hours.

7. Step seven in IPM is the treatment performed by the pest management company. It is not uncommon for multiple techniques and treatments to be done in one unit. Steam treatments kill the bugs and their eggs, but can be costly. Thermal heat treatments are used in extreme cases. Pesticides are controlled substances and should only be administered by the pest management company. Incorrect use by an unlicensed person can result in overexposure and could possibly help the bed bugs to further infest a home. Bleach and ammonia do not kill bed bugs. Most pesticides will only kill on contact but the eggs are still able to hatch. Multiple treatments are therefore necessary to eliminate the problem fully.
  
8. Finally, the IPM relies on constant evaluation on how the program is being carried out. Evaluating the program is an important step in being able to measure the progress that is being made.

