



# Housekeeping

by AH&LA

## Summer bed bug update for hoteliers

Another great article from *The Rooms Chronicle*®, the #1 journal for hotel rooms management! \*\*\*Important notice: This article may not be reproduced without permission of the publisher or the author.\*\*\* College of Hospitality and Tourism Management, Niagara University, P.O. Box 2036, Niagara University, NY 14109-2036. Phone: 866-Read TRC. E-mail: editor@roomschronicle.com

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An issue that used to be relegated to sweepsweeks coverage has now officially become one of the Summer's biggest stories – bed bugs. Compounding the increased coverage are the surveys being conducted by various pest control companies to drum up business. Fortunately, the incidents being reported on are largely centered on retail stores, movie theaters, and even the Empire State Building, and not hotels.

The American Hotel & Lodging Association (AH&LA) has been aggressively engaging the media. AH&LA President/CEO Joe McInerney has been interviewed extensively for print, radio, and television, including Time Magazine, NPR's Diane Rehm Show and DC's Fox and NBC affiliates.

Although the National Pest Management Association (NPMA) estimates there has been an increase in bed bugs in America over the last several years, the increase has had a minimal impact on the vast majority of hotels.

Bed bugs are brought into hotels by guests; it is not a hotel sanitation issue. Education, awareness, and vigilance are critical. A trained and knowledgeable housekeeping staff is one of the best lines of defense, along with having regular pest control inspections.

Typically, the bites produce redness, swelling, and itching. It is important to note bed bug bites do not transmit any human diseases.

### What hoteliers can do

Each hotel or hotel company should create a formal policy on how to handle a bed bug outbreak or complaints. Keep in mind that to effectively treat a one-bedroom space, pest elimination companies estimates range from \$800 to \$1,200. The best prevention is daily inspection.

Employees should inspect rooms for bed bug activity every day by inspecting:

- guestroom linens;
- mattress and boxspring seams;
- headboards;
- bedding;

Staff should be looking not only for live insects, but also for cast skins or speckles of dried blood or excrement on furniture or in places where bed bugs hide. Pay close attention to cleaning guestrooms by vacuuming rooms and accessories daily; inspecting incoming furniture and wall hangings that may have been stored or warehoused; and inspecting and repairing loose wallpaper and cracks in baseboards to reduce areas where bed bugs can settle.

Hotels should also monitor The Bed Bug Registry ([www.bedbugregistry.com](http://www.bedbugregistry.com)), an online user-generated database that tracks infestations in apartment buildings and hotels in North America.

### Additional resources

For AH&LA members, resources pertaining to bedbugs issues are available on the AH&LA Members Only section. AH&LA is also hosting a bedbug Webinar on September 15, 2010 with details to be released soon. Additionally, the American Hotel & Lodging Educational Institute has released a 12-minute DVD, "Bed Bugs: Facts & Prevention", to meet the training needs of

Pictured right: This 12 minute DVD offered by AH&LEI trains your hotel employees to spot bed bugs so they can be caught in the early stages and remediated before a major infestation occurs. Please visit the Educational Institute website ([www.ahlei.org](http://www.ahlei.org)) to purchase this informative video.



housekeepers, maintenance employees, and property managers. The program raises awareness of this critical issue and provides information to help employees detect, manage, and prevent bed bug infestations.

The National Pest Management Association's Bed Bug Hub website ([www.pestworld.org/bed-bugs](http://www.pestworld.org/bed-bugs)) also has a host of resources to assist hoteliers in their efforts, including the popular bed bug posters.

**From the TRC archives:**

The following articles related to bed bugs have appeared in previous issues of *The Rooms Chronicle*®. These articles are available for download from the TRC website at [www.roomschronicle.com](http://www.roomschronicle.com):

- “Mattress encasements protect guests and a hotel’s reputation” by Petra J. Minoff. Vol. 16, No. 6.
- “Natural ways to kill hotel bedbugs” by Glenn Hasek. Vol. 16, No. 6.
- “Unique technology introduced for ‘sniffing out’ hotel bedbug infestations” by William D. Frye, Ph.D., CHE. Vol. 14, No. 6.
- “Bed bugs: Bad dreams, bad publicity, and bad for business” by Sheryl Kline, Ph.D. and Cheng Yan. Vol. 13, No. 2. ✧