How to Move and Leave Bed Bugs Behind

If you think that moving will automatically eliminate your bed bug problem, *think again!*

Unless you take the right precautions, your bed bugs are likely to move with you, causing more trouble in your new living space. However, if you must move to a new home before your bed bug infestation has been eliminated, you can take these measures to avoid bringing bed bugs with you:

Packing:

- Place all belongings in clear plastic bags and seal tightly. Sort items by type (clothes, towels, sheets and blankets) and keep things that are known to be infested away from clean items.
- Wash and dry all fabric items on the hottest recommended setting and then seal them in clear plastic bags labeled "Clean".
- Put items that cannot be sanitized inside sealed clear plastic bags (electronics, appliances, books, etc.) and ask a pest management professional how these items should be treated.
- Purchase bed bug proof mattress covers for the beds of each member of the household. Also cover box springs.
- If you decide to throw away infested furniture or mattresses, wrap them in plastic and clearly paint or write "Bed Bugs" on them, so neighbors won't bring the items into their homes. You may want to go even further and physically slash or destroy the items as well.

Moving Day:

- Have each person shower and change into clean clothing and shoes and bag up the current (possibly infested) clothes for laundering.
- Give pets a bath to ensure that they are bed bug free before taking them to your new home.
- All furniture should be sanitized. Furniture such as night stands and bookshelves can be most effectively sanitized and treated when they are empty. If you are moving furniture items that may be infested, you should first remove and pack the contents of the furniture. The empty furniture should then be treated by a licensed pest management professional before moving into your new residence.

Unpacking:

- Before personal belongings can be accessed in the new home, they MUST be bed bug free, or the new home will likely become infested as well.
- Launder any items not labeled "Clean" before using.
- If you acquire any new or used furniture, inspect it carefully before bringing it into your home to make sure it is bug free.
- Educate yourself about bed bugs and what to look for using fact sheets from http://www.michigan.gov/emergingdiseases
- Contact your building manager immediately if you notice any signs of bed bugs in your new home. The earlier an infestation is detected, the easier it will be to treat.

This fact sheet has been published by the Michigan Bed Bug Working Group (July 2009) and adapted from materials provided by J.L. Gangloff-Kaufmann and C. Pichler, New York State IPM Program, Cornell University