

Bed Bugs

Updated January 2021

Philadelphia's Bed Bug law went into effect on January 1, 2021. Tenants and Landlords have important responsibilities under the law.

HELP! I have bed bugs! What do I do?

- **Tell your landlord right away!** Within 5 business days, call, text, email or send a letter.
 - Your landlord has to answer you within 5 business days and send a pest management professional out to inspect within 10 business days.
- **Let the inspector in during reasonable times.**
 - If you have bed bugs, your landlord must provide written notice to all tenants and hire a pest management professional to do treatment.
- **Prepare your home for treatment** by following all the instructions carefully. It is a lot of work, but it's important in order to get rid of bed bugs.

Who pays for bed bug treatment?

- **Landlord** – The landlord must pay the full cost of treatment if:
 - You let your landlord know about the bedbugs in the first year of your lease, **OR**
 - You let your landlord know about the bedbugs within 180 days of the discovery of bed bugs in an adjacent unit, **OR**
 - You are a subsidized housing tenant (PHA public housing, Section 8 voucher, etc.)
- **In all other cases**, the landlord and tenant split the cost 50/50.

What if my Landlord won't help?

- **Send the landlord a letter** asking the landlord to investigate or treat for bed bugs. It is best to send an email or letter. See the sample letter included with this flyer.
- **File a Complaint with L&I.** Call 311 or submit the L&I complaint form here: https://www.phila.gov/media/20210121170113/TP_004_F_Bed-Bug-Complaint-form-1.21.21.pdf
- **File a Court complaint** against the landlord for actual and punitive damages (\$2,000), cancellation of rent, and attorneys fees and costs.

Before you move in, your landlord should:

- Tell you in writing if the property had bed bugs in the last 120 days.
- Give you the Health Department's Bed Bug Information Flyer: www.phila.gov/media/20201224103922/Philadelphia-Bed-Bug-Brochure-2021_NoDate.pdf
- Have a Bed Bug Control Plan
- If your landlord didn't do this, you can end your lease without penalty.



Philadelphia
Eviction
Prevention
Project

Philly Tenant Hotline 267-443-2500 www.phillytenant.org

The Philadelphia Eviction Prevention Project is a joint effort of: Clarifi, Community Legal Services, Legal Clinic for the Disabled, Philadelphia VIP, SeniorLAW Center, and Tenant Union Representative Network

Re: Bed Bug Letter

_____ (Landlord's Name)

_____ (Landlord's Address)

_____ (Landlord's City, State and Zip Code)

Dear Sir or Madam:

I am writing to request bed bug investigation and treatment at the property I rent from you located at _____ (property address).

According to the Philadelphia Code 9-4800: Responsibilities Concerning Bed Bug Infestation, a landlord must:

- Provide the tenant with the Bed Bug Informational Notice** at the beginning of their lease.
- Tell the tenant in writing any history of bed bugs** in the 120 days before the lease began.
- Maintain a bed bug control plan** that describes prevention and control methods.
- Acknowledge any complaint of bed bugs** within five business days of receiving a complaint.
- Obtain investigation services** from a pest management professional within 10 business days of receiving a complaint.
- Provide written notice and bed bug remediation services**, if the property has bed bugs.

I reported a bed bug issue to you on _____ (date you reported bed bugs to landlord).

Therefore, I am requesting that you hire a qualified pest management professional to investigate and treat for bed bugs. If you do not comply with Philadelphia Code 9-4800, I reserve the right to legally withhold rent or file suit for damages including punitive damages up to \$2000.

I appreciate your prompt attention to this matter.

Sincerely,

_____ (Your Signature)

_____ (Date)

If possible, send certified mail, return receipt requested.