

CIRCULAR

Date: June 4, 2015

CIRCULAR NUMBER: EIA #2012-36R Alternate Program(s):

To: Community Social Service Supervisors/Program Managers

Subject: Bed Bugs

Reference: EIA Administrative Manual Section 19.1.20 Major Repairs
EIA Administrative Manual Section 21.1.3 Allowable Items

Type: Policy Replaces # 2012-36
 Procedure
 Rate
 Information Only

Effective Date Immediately

This circular has been updated to allow for the release of laundry funds to eligible participants as part of a precautionary bed bug treatment plan. Additionally, the Materials Distribution Agency (MDA) rates for mattress and box spring covers have also been updated.

This circular provides policy and process information to assist participants on Employment and Income Assistance (EIA) to eradicate bed bugs from their home. Participants that are residing in Manitoba Housing units should contact Manitoba Housing directly for assistance with this matter.

Currently, there are two types of measures taken to treat residences for bed bugs. The first treatment is when bed bugs are physically in a person's residence and requires a fair amount of preparation. Usually, multiple treatments are required to ensure all bed bugs are eradicated when they are found in a person's residence. The second treatment is precautionary and is used when bed bugs are not found in a person's residence but in a neighboring residence, or when the landlord is simply taking preventative measures due to historical bed bug issues. A precautionary treatment requires less preparation.

The precautionary treatment is not mandatory. However, if the precautionary treatment is offered, the participant is encouraged to cooperate as it can decrease a participant's chance of getting bed bugs.

Manitoba Housing provides checklists to help people prepare their residences for treatment. Please find copies of the checklists attached.

If a landlord or pest control technician provides verbal or written confirmation that an EIA participant's residence will be treated for bed bugs, EIA will authorize the following costs

according to the Special Needs policy section 21.1.3 Allowable Items for extenuating circumstances:

Both #1 and #2 below apply to all participants on the program regardless of case category:

1. Cost of all household laundry – If bed bugs have been detected in a person’s residence, a participant is required to wash all bedding and clothing in hot water and/or put items in the dryer for at least 30 minutes. All washed laundry should be placed in sealed garbage bags and should not be brought back into the house until after the treatment has been completed. The guidelines for laundry costs are \$10.00 for garbage bags and laundry soap and an additional \$15.00 per person for laundry purposes. These figures are to provide a guideline and may vary if actual costs are lower or higher. Note, that while some Manitoba Housing buildings provide a limited number of free washes/dries per month, this does not mean additional funds should not be provided if a participant must make use of laundry services as part of a bed bug treatment.

Manitoba Housing’s policy now requires all tenants to complete a laundry cycle when a building or suite is being treated as a precautionary measure. To stay in-line with Manitoba Housing policy, EIA will provide laundry funds, when requested, for precautionary treatments for Manitoba Housing residents (and other housing providers) as well as eligible participants outside of subsidized housing.

EIA staff should continue to provide laundry funds for each subsequent treatment when bed bugs are found in a person’s residence until they are eradicated.

2. Mattress and box spring covers - these are used to protect the mattress and box spring and can be ordered through Materials Distribution Agency (MDA).

The mattress covers item numbers are:

- 057445 (twin bed 39X75X9-15) \$30.00
- 057447 (double bed 54x75X9-15) \$37.00

The box spring covers item numbers are:

- 057221 (twin bed 39X75X9) \$16.00
- 057222 (twin bed 39X75X12) \$17.00
- 057223 (double bed 54X75X9) \$17.00
- 057224 (double bed 54X75X12) \$20.00

The mattress and box spring covers are essential to protecting the mattress/box spring re-infestation after treatment.

These expenditures should **ONLY** be authorized after treatment for bed bugs is complete and when no other organization can provide the covers (Manitoba Housing provides covers for residents that request them). EIA will not pay for replacement furniture due to bed bugs except in the case where public health staff order that furniture or mattresses be removed, then replacement costs can be given consideration.

#3 below pertains only to individuals under the Persons with Disabilities category:

3. Cost of preparing a residence for bed bug treatment for persons with disabilities assessed by EIA staff to be incapable of performing the necessary cleaning that is required to ensure an effective treatment. In homes where there is a need for disposal of belongings prior to the treatment process, EIA may consider providing for the cost of disposal.

We have been advised that the maximum amount of time that an occupant would need to leave their home following treatment is 4-8 hours. The landlord and/or the pest control technician will advise the tenant of the length of time that they are required to vacate the premises as it is dependent upon the type of chemical used in the treatment. Participants should not require

overnight accommodations in a hotel. However, participants with young children or those that have compromised health conditions may be advised to evacuate the premises for 24 hours. The landlord or the exterminator will advise the tenant how long they are required to be off the premises. In these cases, costs for alternative accommodations can be approved if no other options through family/friends are available.

All participants who suspect they have bedbugs should report this to their landlord. Treatment in the eradication process is the responsibility of the owner of the building. If disputes arise in these circumstances involving the owner, the participant can contact Residential Tenancies Branch (RTB) at 945-2476 for assistance in resolving any issues. If the participant is required to make a claim to the RTB, EIA will compensate the participants the cost of the claim when they provide receipts to their EIA office (as per Section 19.1.2 of the EIA Administrative Manual).

Participants who own their home, regardless of case category, may access funds to pay for the cost of bed bug extermination under the Major Repairs policy. EIA is required to place a lien on the home for any amount provided for bed bug eradication, except for the first \$200 which can be paid for under the Minor Repairs policy, provided that the Department has not already provided funds for \$200 worth of minor repairs in the fiscal year. Policy 19.1.20 has been revised to reflect that extermination of bed bugs can be supported under the Major Repairs policy.



Preparing your suite for bed bug treatment

Manitoba Housing will be treating your suite for bed bugs. Before treatment day, please prepare your suite as follows:

Living room, dining room, bedrooms, bathroom, storage areas and basements:

- Pull all furniture and other items two feet from the walls
- Sweep or vacuum all floors
- Remove all items from the floors of closets and storage areas
- Do not pile any items on the furniture including the bed
- Cover fish bowls and aquariums with plastic and leave them in place
- Remove all other pets from your suite and keep them out for at least 12 hours after treatment
- Leave all plants in place, as the treatment will not affect them
- Remove all sheets, bedspreads and pillowcases from beds and place them in sealed garbage bags
- Remove all articles from closet floors and place on higher shelves
- Place all clean and dirty clothing in separate sealed plastic or tote bags
- Storage rooms must have access to all wall areas. If there is shelving in a room, the area under it must be clear.

Kitchen:

- Clean countertops as well as the top of the fridge and stove completely, putting all food, dishes and cookware in kitchen cabinets, oven or sealed containers

After treatment is complete:

- After we complete the treatment and you return, please do the following:
 - Wash all dirty clothes including bedding in hot water and dry on high heat
 - Put clean sheets, bedspreads and pillowcases on the bed
 - Sweep or vacuum on a daily basis but do not wash floors along the baseboards for at least 14 days
 - If mattress covers were installed during treatment, keep them on for the life of the mattress

Manitoba Housing can help you prepare your suite for treatment by moving heavy furniture, large or bulky items. Please help us with this by moving any fragile or breakable items. If you require assistance, please call the maintenance line at 945-4663 or 1-800-661-4663.

Please make arrangements for the duration of the treatment. You must leave your suite for a minimum of four hours after treatment. It is recommended that persons with respiratory issues, pregnant women and newborns under 18 months of age remain outside of the unit for 12 hours after treatment.

Preparing your suite for precautionary bed bug treatment



Manitoba Housing will be treating your suite for bed bugs. Before treatment day, please prepare your suite as follows:

Living room, dining room, bedrooms, bathroom, storage areas and basements:

- Pull all furniture and other items two feet from the walls
- Sweep or vacuum all floors before treatment
- Do not pile any items on the furniture
- Cover fish bowls and aquariums with plastic and leave them in place
- Remove all other pets from your suite and keep them out for at least 12 hours after treatment
- Leave all plants in place where they are, as the treatment will not affect them
- Remove all items from closet floors and place on higher shelves
- Place all clean and dirty clothing in separate sealed plastic or tote bags
- Storage rooms must have access to all wall areas. If there is shelving in a room, the area under it must be clear

Kitchen:

- Clean countertops as well as the top of the fridge and stove completely, putting all food, dishes, cookware and any other items in kitchen cabinets or sealed containers

After treatment is complete:

- After we complete the treatment and you return, please do the following:
 - Wash all dirty clothes including bedding in hot water and dry on high heat
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