

Hiring a Pest Control Company for Bed Bug Work

Because bed bugs are difficult to control, it is extremely important to find a company that has solid experience in working with these pests. Don't hire a company based on price alone. Make sure the company is qualified to do the job right the first time, and you will avoid headaches and more expense later.

Interview the company before hiring them

1. Ask if the company is licensed by the Structural Pest Control Board. Do not hire an unlicensed company. Ask for the company's license number and check this web site: <http://www.pestboard.ca.gov/license>
2. Ask for references for other successful bed bug jobs. Get names and telephone numbers and call to see how the company performed.
3. Ask how the company approaches the problem of bed bugs.
A good company should
 - insist on inspecting before quoting a final price
 - provide a written inspection report along with an action plan
 - provide a written report of repairs that are needed
 - price a job according to inspection findings and not simply charge a flat fee
 - recommend and make repeated visits until the problem is solved
 - educate the homeowner or building occupants on how to look for, avoid and prevent bed bugs
 - use an integrated pest management (IPM) approach for bed bugs that could include
 - a. education
 - b. vacuuming
 - c. cleaning and clutter control
 - d. steam cleaning
 - e. treatment with heat
 - f. judicious use of pesticide sprays and dustsNote that a good company will ask about whether pets or children are present and manage the use of pesticides accordingly
 - provide regular training to their employees on the control of bed bugs
 - provide educational materials for their clients
 - work with you until the problem is solved
 - encourage notifying adjacent apartments about the problem
 - encourage inspection of adjacent apartments
4. Ask if the company is certified in integrated pest management (IPM). Currently there are 2 independent, 3rd party certification programs: EcoWise Certified and Green Shield Certified. There is also one pest control industry certification program called GreenPro. Being certified is an added plus but not a requirement to ensure good work.

Understand the treatment procedures, pricing, and responsibilities

1. The company should provide you with information on the types of bed bug services they offer.
2. Be sure you understand and agree on a treatment plan and pricing structure. Bed bugs can be expensive to control and the cheapest services are rarely the best.
3. Be sure you understand what the company will be responsible for *and* what you will be responsible for. Bed bugs cannot be controlled without cooperation among the company, the property owner and the tenant. The company should provide you with written information on what to expect and what you will need to do before, during and after the service.
4. If you can, walk around your home with the pest control professional during each visit and keep track of what is being done. Ask questions if you don't understand.

Do your part and follow up on the pest control company's recommendations.

We are not aware of any miracle, overnight solutions to bed bug problems. If the company promises this, they are very likely to be unsuccessful.

