

## **NORTHWEST GEORGIA HOUSING AUTHORITY BED BUG POLICY**

Bed bugs are a growing national problem, and as a result, this policy has been created for both the Public Housing program and the Housing Choice Voucher program. The purpose of this policy is to set forth the roles and responsibilities of all parties (NWGHA, Resident, and Landlord) in minimizing the potential for bedbugs. The policy will also provide guidance in cases where bed bugs are present in order to eliminate them as quickly as possible.

Bed bugs are difficult to contain without the proper treatment. Therefore it is imperative that all parties (NWGHA, Resident, and Landlord) work simultaneously toward a common goal, extermination and elimination. Left untreated bed bugs can spread throughout a residence affecting current and future residents.

### **Housing Choice Voucher Program**

#### **Landlord Roles and Responsibilities:**

The Housing Assistance Payment (HAP) contract requires the landlord to maintain the contract unit and its premises in accordance with Housing Quality Standards (HQS). If bed bugs are present, it is the responsibility of the landlord, as stated in the HQS (CFR 982.401), to ensure that the dwelling unit and its equipment be in sanitary condition and free of vermin and rodent infestation. In order to comply with HQS, if the presence of bed bugs is suspected, the landlord must notify NWGHA immediately and it is strongly recommended that the landlord contact an extermination professional for an immediate inspection. If the landlord chooses to perform their own initial inspection, NWGHA has created a “Landlord Inspection Checklist” that may assist in the assessment of potential problems. If treatment is deemed necessary, a copy of the contract the landlord entered into with the extermination professional (including all treatment) performed must be provided to NWGHA by the landlord within 48 hours of initial determination that treatment is required. In addition, the landlord must complete the “Landlord Certification Statement” document and send to NWGHA within 72 hours of the initial determination that treatment is required. Failure to comply with the above requirements is a direct violation of the HAP contract and may result in abatement, suspension or termination of housing assistance payments, termination of the HAP contract, and suspension of eligibility to participate in the Housing Choice Voucher program.

#### **Resident Roles and Responsibilities:**

The HAP contract requires the resident to keep the unit and its premises free from damage. Therefore, if the presence of bed bugs is suspected, it is the resident’s responsibility to notify the landlord and NWGHA immediately in order to minimize any potential damage to the unit. In addition, it is the responsibility of the resident to work cooperatively with the landlord and/or extermination professional to ensure the successful elimination of bed bugs. Resident non-compliance may result in the loss of their Housing Choice Voucher. If the resident notifies the landlord of the presence of bed bugs and the landlord fails to take action within a reasonable period of time, the resident should notify NWGHA. NWGHA will assist the resident in relocation if it is deemed necessary and appropriate. Prior to relocation, NWGHA will notify new landlord of resident’s prior exposure to bed bugs. In addition, the resident must complete all items on the “Relocation Task List” document.

**NWGHA Roles and Responsibilities:**

NWGHA will ensure the landlord maintains the unit within HQS guidelines and provide guidance on the resolution of any potential bed bug problems. NWGHA will assist in resident relocation, including the scheduling of moves, if it has been determined relocation is necessary and appropriate. When relocation is necessary, NWGHA will ensure the resident completes the “Relocation Task List” prior to relocation in order to minimize the transfer of bed bugs to the new unit. NWGHA will also require all program participants and landlords to disclose at intake, recertification, and inspection all exposure to bed bugs within the last twelve month period.

**Public Housing program**

**NWGHA Roles and Responsibilities:**

Upon notification from the resident, NWGHA will perform an initial inspection of the resident’s residence using the “Central Maintenance Tracking Sheet.” If it is determined that bed bugs are present, NWGHA will provide the resident with the “NWGHA & Resident Roles and Responsibilities” document. The above document will be explained to the resident to ensure understanding and compliance prior to treatment. In addition, NWGHA will secure the resident’s signature indicating understanding of the document. Upon successful completion by the resident of their roles and responsibilities NWGHA will professionally treat the residence and perform follow-up to ensure treatment was successful. In order to educate residents and minimize potential for the presence of bed bugs, NWGHA has created a “Prevention Tips” document.

**Resident Roles and Responsibilities:**

HUD regulations require the resident’s cooperation in order to successfully eliminate the presence of bed bugs. Therefore, it is the resident’s responsibility to call in a work order as soon as the presence of bed bugs is suspected. This will allow NWGHA to address the potential infestation at its onset and before it affects other residents. In addition, the resident must be onsite when the initial inspection is conducted. If it is determined by NWGHA that bed bugs are present, the resident must complete all items listed on the “NWGHA & Resident Roles and Responsibilities” prior to treatment and as soon as possible. This will help to minimize the severity of bed bug presence and resolve the problem quickly. Residents will not be responsible for the cost of treatment.

**Bed Bug Policy Attachments**

**Housing Choice Voucher program:**

- Landlord Inspection Checklist
- Relocation Task List
- Landlord Letter
- Exterminator Selection Tips
- Landlord Certification Statement

**Public Housing program:**

- Central Maintenance Tracking Sheet
- NWGHA & Resident Roles and Responsibilities
- Prevention Tips

Northwest Georgia Housing Authority  
P.O. Box 1428  
Rome, GA 30162-1428

**Bed Bug Management Plan  
Landlord Inspection Checklist**

**Resident Information**

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ Alt. Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Email: \_\_\_\_\_

**Inspection List**

Check bed including mattress, box spring, and headboard for blood spots and fecal matter. Strip back the covers, stand up the mattress, remove the box spring and flip it over paying close attention to all seams.

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Inspect furnishings close to the bed for the presence of bed bugs. Pull out dresser drawers and check inside drawers and crevices. Look under televisions, stereos, and other equipment, behind pictures, in the crevice behind the baseboard, and in stacks of clothing.

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Check drapes, wall decorations, and cracks in the ceiling-wall junction for presence of bed bugs.

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Check other areas of the residence for the presence of bed bugs paying specific attention to furniture, seams, and crevices.

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Discuss and inspect (where appropriate) bed bug bites with resident.

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Bed Bug presence noted:  Yes  No

*This document is provided as a reference only. If the presence of bed bugs is suspected and you are not comfortable inspecting the unit thoroughly, you should consider contacting an extermination professional.*

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**Bed Bug Management Plan  
Relocation Task List**

Bed bugs are difficult to contain without the proper treatment. Therefore if a resident relocates and the proper treatment has not taken place, the bed bugs will move with the resident as bed bugs can be carried in furniture, bedding, clothing, etc. If it has been determined that you must relocate to a new unit, certain steps must be followed to ensure that bed bugs are not transferred to the new residence. To prevent further infestation, the Relocation Task List below **MUST** be completed in preparation for relocation.

**RELOCATION TASK LIST** (initial each item)

\_\_\_\_\_ Remove all sheets, blankets, mattress covers, pillowcases, etc. from beds and wash in hot water (120+ degrees recommended) and dry in clothes dryer on the highest heat setting for at least 30 minutes. Fold them and place them in plastic garbage bags, seal bags tightly. Do not put them back on the bed until move is complete.

\_\_\_\_\_ Wash all clothing, toys, towels, and other linens in hot water (120+ degrees recommended) and dry in clothes dryer on the highest heat setting for at least 30 minutes. Place clean items inside airtight plastic storage bins or plastic garbage bags that are sealed tightly and store until relocated.

\_\_\_\_\_ Vacuum (using disposable vacuum cleaner bags) all furniture, dresser drawers, night stand drawers, mattresses, and box springs. Place disposable vacuum cleaner bag inside plastic garbage bag, seal plastic garbage bag tightly, and discard in outdoor trash receptacle immediately.

\_\_\_\_\_ Purchase and place special bed bug mattress and box spring encasements around all mattresses and box springs. Bed bug mattress and box spring encasements are an effective bed bug killer when combined with treatment and must remain on all mattresses and box springs for at least one year. Bed bug encasements can be purchased locally at Bed, Bath, and Beyond for approximately \$10.00 – \$20.00 depending on size needed. The resident is solely responsible for the purchase of this item.

\_\_\_\_\_ Discard or have all infested furniture professionally treated by a licensed exterminator. If resident chooses to keep furniture, proof of treatment must be provided to NWGHA prior to relocation. NWGHA will not relocate resident to a new unit with infested furniture.

**RESIDENT STATEMENT OF CERTIFICATION**

I, \_\_\_\_\_, certify that I have read and understand the information above and commit to performing the Relocation Task List. I also understand that if I do not complete the above listed items, there is the potential for the bed bugs to be carried to the new residence and NWGHA will not authorize a transfer to a new unit.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Resident Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

Re: Potential Bed Bug Infestation

Dear Landlord:

It is the goal of the Northwest Georgia Housing Authority to promote and provide safe, quality housing to our program participants. Recently, bed bugs have become a topic of national importance. Most recently, the Environmental Protection Agency held a National Bed Bug Summit to discuss ways to prevent the resurgence of bed bugs. While the Northwest Georgia Housing Authority has not encountered bed bugs in the Public Housing program, we have been made aware of the presence of bed bugs in a few of the privately owned residences assisted under the Housing Choice Voucher program. In order to protect your resident, rental assistance income, and asset, we strongly recommend that you take all resident concerns regarding bed bugs seriously.

Upon notification from the resident of the potential presence of bed bugs, it is the landlord's responsibility to have a thorough inspection conducted by a qualified party. NWGHA recommends a licensed, experienced, professional exterminator. Please refer to the back of this letter for information that may assist you in the selection of an exterminator.

Note that it is the responsibility of the resident to work cooperatively with the landlord and/or extermination professional to ensure the successful elimination of bed bugs. It is imperative that all parties (Resident and Landlord) work together toward a common goal, extermination and elimination. Left untreated, bed bugs can spread throughout a residence, potentially affecting current and future residents.

The Housing Assistance Payment (HAP) contract requires the landlord to maintain the contract unit and premises in accordance with Housing Quality Standards (HQS). If bed bugs are present, it is the responsibility of the landlord, as stated in the HQS (CFR 982.401), to ensure that the dwelling unit and its equipment be in sanitary condition and free of vermin and rodent infestation.

Failure to comply constitutes a direct violation of the HAP contract and may result in abatement, suspension of housing assistance payments, termination of the HAP contract, and/or suspension of eligibility of the affected unit to participate in the Housing Choice Voucher program (if the unit remains untreated).

Sincerely,

Cheryl Molock  
Director of Housing  
Northwest Georgia Housing Authority  
P.O. Box 1428  
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**Bed Bug Management Plan  
Exterminator Selection Tips**

The information listed below is from the New York Times article “Sleeping with the Enemy (Bed Bugs).” Please note that the information listed is provided as a reference only. If the presence of bed bugs is suspected, immediate action should be taken.

- Most successful treatment efforts include a combination of a thorough cleaning and sorting, along with repeated professional bed bug treatment applications.
- Many pest control companies will perform a visual inspection at no charge in hopes that if you have bed bugs, you’ll hire them to do the treatment.
- According to the article, you should be wary of pest control companies that emphasize their bed bug expertise.
- Find an established pest control company that has been in business at least five years.
- The article states that exterminators may charge \$250 to \$900 a room to get rid of bed bugs, depending on the level of infestation and the types of treatments used. Prices in our local area may vary.
- Be sure the exterminator makes at least one follow-up visit. According to the article it’s near impossible to kill all bed bugs in a given area with one treatment.
- Ask if follow-up treatments are included in the price quoted to you.
- Check to see that the company and technician you hire are licensed in your state.
- Check the Better Business Bureau for any complaints filed against the exterminators you are considering.

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**Bed Bug Management Plan  
Landlord Certification Statement**

It is the goal of the Northwest Georgia Housing Authority to promote and provide safe, quality housing to our program participants. If bed bugs are present, it is the responsibility of the landlord, as stated in the HQS (CFR 982.401), to ensure that the dwelling unit and its equipment be in sanitary condition and free of vermin and rodent infestation. It is the responsibility of the resident to work cooperatively with the landlord and/or extermination professional to ensure the successful elimination of bed bugs. It is imperative that all parties (Resident, Landlord, and Extermination Professional) work together toward a common goal, extermination and elimination.

To assist NWGHA in its goal of providing safe, quality housing, NWGHA requests the following information be completed by the landlord upon completion of treatment (within 72 hours of initial determination that treatment is necessary):

- 1) Date unit was treated \_\_\_\_\_.
- 2) Type of treatment provided (methods, products used, areas treated):
- 3) Did resident complete required (should be detailed in landlord/resident lease agreement) pre-treatment activities? For example:
  - Furniture moved to center of room being treated?  YES  NO  N/A
  - All items removed from floors and closets?  YES  NO  N/A
  - Mattresses encased in bed bug mattress encasements?  YES  NO  N/A
  - All pictures removed from walls?  YES  NO  N/A
  - All areas being treated vacuumed including furniture, dresser drawers, night stands, mattresses, and box springs?  YES  NO  N/A
  - All cardboard hangers, boxes, etc. discarded?  YES  NO  N/A
  - All clothing, linens, towels, etc. washed in hot water (+120 degrees), dried on highest heat setting for at least 30 minutes, and stored in tightly sealed plastic garbage bags?  YES  NO  N/A
- 4) Please list any additional items required to be completed prior to treatment and indicate if items were completed.
- 5) Was follow up or additional treatment recommended by the Extermination Professional?  
 YES  NO  
If yes, please provide date when follow up or additional treatment will be conducted:  
\_\_\_\_\_

**LANDLORD STATEMENT OF CERTIFICATION**

I, \_\_\_\_\_, certify that I have had the unit located at \_\_\_\_\_ professionally treated by a licensed extermination professional in order to eliminate the presence of bed bugs.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Landlord Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

Northwest Georgia Housing Authority  
P.O. Box 1428  
Rome, GA 30162-1428

**Bed Bug Management Plan  
Central Maintenance Tracking Sheet**

Resident Information	
Name:	
Address:	
Phone:	Alt. Phone: <span style="border-bottom: 1px solid black;"></span>
Email:	

Step 1: Assessment (within one work day of work order call-in)		
Date Completed	Date Verified	Action Item
		Work Order Clerk receives emergency inspection request.
		Work Order Clerk schedules inspection with resident and exterminator within 24 hours.
		Exterminator conducts inspection with resident present.
Bed Bugs Present? <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No		
Locations: <input type="checkbox"/> Mattress <input type="checkbox"/> Box spring <input type="checkbox"/> Walls <input type="checkbox"/> Baseboard		
Physical Indications: <input type="checkbox"/> Grouped, Bite markings <input type="checkbox"/> Red, itchy skin		
Bug samples collected: <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No		
Comments: <hr style="border: 0; border-top: 1px solid black; margin: 5px 0;"/> <hr style="border: 0; border-top: 1px solid black; margin: 5px 0;"/>		

Step 2: Preparation – Exterminator (during initial inspection, immediately after determining the presence of bed bugs.)		
Date Completed	Date Verified	Action Item
		Provide resident “NWGHA Roles and Responsibilities”
		Obtain resident signature on “NWGHA Roles and Responsibilities”
		Provide resident with bed bug encasement(s) for each mattress and box spring.
		Schedule treatment as soon as possible, but no more than three days after the determination that bed bugs are present.
Comments: <hr style="border: 0; border-top: 1px solid black; margin: 5px 0;"/> <hr style="border: 0; border-top: 1px solid black; margin: 5px 0;"/>		

Step 3: Treatment – Exterminator (ASAP, but no more than three days from initial inspection.)		
Date Completed	Date Verified	Action Item
		Unit Readiness: Determine if resident has completed steps outlined in “NWGHA and Resident Roles and Responsibilities”
Unit ready? <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No		If yes, conduct treatment and continue with steps 4 – 5. If no, cancel treatment and contact Manager immediately to process as a lease violation. (Work order for treatment is not to be closed until treatment is rendered.)
Comments: <hr style="border: 0; border-top: 1px solid black; margin: 5px 0;"/> <hr style="border: 0; border-top: 1px solid black; margin: 5px 0;"/>		



<b>Step 4: Follow up – Maintenance (within ten days of inspection)</b>		
<b>Date Completed</b>	<b>Date Verified</b>	<b>Action Item</b>
		Conduct phone follow up with resident in ten days of treatment date (from Step 3) to determine if treatment was successful or additional treatment required.
Additional treatment needed? <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No		If ye, contact Manager to schedule time for unit to be ready and call in emergency work order for retreatment. If no, continue to step 5.
Comments: _____ _____		

<b>Step 5: Completion - Maintenance</b>		
<b>Date Completed</b>	<b>Date Verified</b>	<b>Action Item</b>
		Based on Exterminator assessment in step 1, bed bugs not present.
		Based on Maintenance follow up in step 4, treatment completed.
		Distribute completed form.
Comments: _____ _____		

\*distribute completed form to Property Manager for resident file, Director of Housing, and Director of Technical Services.

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### **Bed Bug Management Plan NWGHA & Resident Roles and Responsibilities**

It has been determined, based on the inspection of your residence that bed bugs are present and professional treatment is required. Bed bugs are a problem that can only be solved when both parties (NWGHA and resident) work simultaneously toward a common goal, extermination and elimination. HUD regulations require the resident's cooperation in order to successfully eliminate the presence of bed bugs. Without proper treatment, bed bugs are difficult to contain and have the potential to infest neighboring housing units. In addition, if a resident relocates and the proper treatment has not taken place, the bed bugs will move with the resident as bed bugs can be carried in furniture, bedding, clothing, etc. NWGHA will not be responsible for the reimbursement and/or replacement of any resident furniture, clothing, household items, and medical expenses.

The following plan outlines the roles and responsibilities of NWGHA (landlord) and the resident in the treatment of bed bugs:

#### **NWGHA**

- Inspect residence for infestation within one work day of receipt of emergency work order.
- Schedule treatment date as soon as possible, but no later than three days after the initial inspection (subject to resident readiness).
  - Scheduled treatment date \_\_\_\_\_.
- Provide at initial inspection special bed bug mattress and box spring encasements for use on all mattresses and box springs, in accordance with the Maintenance Charge list. Resident may provide own mattress and box spring encasements, however the time frames still apply.
- Provide a dozen (12) large trash bags at no charge to the resident for the storage of clothing, towels, toys, other linens, etc. prior to and during treatment.
- Treat residence including furniture.
  - If infested furniture does not respond to treatment, NWGHA will dispose of furniture at resident's request OR resident can have furniture professionally re-treated at their expense. Proof of re-treatment MUST be provided to NWGHA within 48 hours of determination that initial treatment was unsuccessful. If the retreatment of furniture is deemed unsuccessful, resident may be required to dispose of furniture.
- Perform follow-up with resident within 10 days of treatment to ensure treatment was effective.
- Perform additional treatments as necessary.

#### **Resident**

- Resident must be onsite at the scheduled time when the initial inspection is conducted.
- For treatment to be effective, resident must perform the tasks listed below prior to the scheduled treatment date. NWGHA encourages resident to complete items listed as soon as possible in order to minimize severity of bed bug presence and resolve the problem quickly.
  - Remove all sheets, blankets, mattress covers, pillowcases, etc. from beds and wash in hot water (120+ degrees recommended) and dry in clothes dryer on the highest heat setting for at least 30 minutes. Fold them and place them in plastic garbage bags and seal the plastic bags tightly. Do not put them back on the bed until the evening after treatment.

- Remove everything from bedrooms and hall closets. Closets, dresser drawers, and night stand drawers must be empty. Remove all clothing, toys, boxes, etc. from bedroom floors.
  - Wash all clothing, towels, and other linens in hot water (120+ degrees recommended) and dry in the dryer on the highest heat setting for at least 30 minutes. Place clean items inside airtight plastic storage bins or plastic garbage bags that are sealed tightly and store until after treatment.
  - Vacuum (using disposable vacuum cleaner bags) all furniture, dresser drawers, night stand drawers, mattresses, and box springs. Place disposable vacuum cleaner bag inside plastic garbage bag that is sealed tightly and discard in outdoor trash receptacle immediately.
  - Move all furniture to the center of the room(s) being treated.
  - Discard all cardboard hangers, boxes, etc.
  - Remove all pictures from walls.
  - Place all bed bug mattress encasements (provided at initial inspection) on all beds. The bed bug mattress encasement is an effective bed bug killer when combined with treatment and must remain on the mattress for at least one year. If the mattress or box spring encasement becomes torn or damaged it is the resident's responsibility to replace.
  - Discarded mattresses, box springs, furniture, etc. must not be placed in dumpsters; they must be removed from the premises.
  - Remain out of the residence for four hours after treatment (includes all household members and pets).
- Furniture that does not respond to treatment must be disposed of or professionally treated. If resident chooses to dispose of furniture, NWGHA will remove furniture from the unit at resident's request. If resident chooses to dispose of furniture on their own it MUST be removed from the premises. If resident chooses not to dispose of infested furniture they MUST have it re-treated (at their expense and within 48 hours of determination that initial treatment was unsuccessful) by a licensed exterminator. Resident must provide proof of re-treatment to NWGHA within 72 hours of determination that initial treatment was unsuccessful.

***FAILURE TO COMPLY: If treatment is scheduled and the exterminator determines that resident has not performed the above stated responsibilities, the following will occur:***

- 1. Treatment will be cancelled by the exterminator.***
- 2. Resident will be held financially responsible for all costs incurred in accordance with the Maintenance Charge list.***
- 3. Resident lease may be terminated at NWGHA's discretion.***

**RESIDENT STATEMENT OF CERTIFICATION**

I, \_\_\_\_\_, certify that I have read and understand the roles and responsibilities (NWGHA and resident) as stated above and agree to perform them in order to successfully eliminate the presence of bed bugs.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Resident Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
NWGHA Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

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**Bed Bug Management Plan  
Prevention Tips**

Wash all bedding regularly in hot water. The water should be at least 120 degrees.

Use bed bug encasements on all mattresses and box springs.

Check your own bed for bed bugs from time to time. Catching them early will make bedbug treatment easier if bed bugs do occur.

Vacuum floors regularly. Use the brush tool of your vacuum to vacuum your mattress. Use the crevice tool to vacuum crevices in the mattress and your baseboards.

Clean up clutter to reduce hiding spots.

Caulk holes in floors and walls.

When purchasing second hand clothing, place all garments in a sealed bag until they can be washed and place in a dryer on high heat for 15 to 30 minutes.

If you purchase used furniture, examine it for bed bugs. Pay special attention to used mattresses and bed frames.

When traveling, check your room for signs of bed bugs such as bloodstains on the pillows or linens. Inspect mattress seams, look behind headboards and pictures. If you suspect you may have brought bed bugs home, place infected items in the dryer or freezer.

After you return from a trip, check your luggage for insects that might have hitched a ride.