



Choosing and Working with a Pest Control Company

The New York City area has more than 1,000 pest control companies and thousands of licensed pest professionals. They are not all of equal quality, and not all are well trained in managing bed bugs. To get rid of bed bugs, you need to choose the right company, be clear about what you want done, and monitor the service you get.

Find a Pest Control Company

- Ask your neighbors who may have successfully managed bed bugs for a referral.
- Use phone and Web directories to find listings. Some companies may list themselves as bed-bug specialists.
- Look for companies that advertise “integrated pest management” services. They’re more likely to inspect and monitor conditions, and they’ll recognize needed improvements.
- Use companies that are registered with the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation and have licensed applicators. You can check for information on the company you want to hire by calling (718) 482-4994 or visiting <http://www.dec.ny.gov>.

Interview companies before you choose them

- Good companies will provide references. Ask for the names and telephone numbers of customers who have received their services for bed bugs.
- Ask about their membership in recognized national, state and local pest control associations.
- Ask companies how they approach the problem of bed bugs. Good companies will:
 - insist on inspecting before quoting a final price
 - provide a written inspection report, along with an action plan
 - price a job according to inspection findings, not based on a flat fee
 - make referrals for any repair that needs to be done
 - recommend and make repeat visits until the problem is solved
 - point out where bed bugs may hide and treat those areas
 - use vacuum, cleaning, steaming and other mechanical approaches to remove and kill bed bugs
 - ask whether pets or children are present, and manage the use of pesticides accordingly
 - provide regular training to their employees and educational materials to clients
 - work with you until the problem has been controlled

- encourage notifying adjacent apartments about the problem and encouraging them to inspect for bed bugs
- Agree on a service treatment plan and pricing structure. Don't short-change the solution. The cheapest services are rarely the best.
- Know what you and the company are each responsible for. If repairs are not part of the service agreement, then the company should provide you with a list of things needed to solve the problem.
- Walk around your home with the pest control professional during each visit, and keep track of the work being done.
- Ask the pest control professional to point out any conditions that contribute to bed bugs in or near your property, and get a written inspection report.
- Do your part, and follow up on the company's recommendations.