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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Bed Bugs Coming to a Home or Neighborhood Near You

Not your ordinary house pests, bed bugs are on the rebound

GREENSBORO, NC (February 12, 2008) – “One man’s junk is another man’s treasure,” the old saying goes. However, picking up somebody’s old couch off the side of the road may land more than an antique furniture find, it could also lead to a bountiful case of the bed bugs. The National Pest Management Association (NPMA) reports a steady increase in the number of reported bed bug infestations, while local pest management professionals are finding residential infestations are becoming more common.

According to Terminix-Triad Director of Operations Burns Blackwell, the bed bug infestation is here to stay. “We’re only going to see more and more cases of bed bugs in the future, especially in people’s homes,” says Blackwell. Unlike most household pests, bed bugs are not a threat to burrow under the house, eat and contaminate food in the pantry, or leave disease-filled droppings. However, their bite is far worse than their bark. When bedbugs bite human skin, they inject an anesthetic-like liquid that numbs the skin and allows the pest to bite undisturbed. In fact, humans don’t usually wake up when they are being bitten, and some do not feel the after affects of the bite until days later and the infestation has increased.

“It’s a very difficult and extensive process to eliminate them and unlike mice or roaches, simply cleaning the house or laying out traps will not prevent them,” says Blackwell. “In addition, we live in a culture today in which far more people travel, and travel is a big contributing factor in spreading bed bug infestations.”

Bed bugs have been identified in every state and nearly every major metropolitan city in the country, according to research conducted by the NPMA. The infestations have been most common in hotels, hospitals and dorm rooms where large congregations of people are found, allowing the pests to migrate from person to person.

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Recently however, the hitchhiking pest has started moving into suburban homes and neighborhoods. “In the past we were primarily servicing multi-unit dwellings, but we’re certainly starting to service more residential locations as people bring bed bugs home with them from hotels or cruise ships, or their kids bring them home from summer camp or college dorms,” says Blackwell. “The bugs don’t just come in on the body, they can also latch onto clothing or luggage, which makes identifying and preventing them extremely difficult.”

Once the bugs make it into the home, eliminating the pest is a taxing process as the nocturnal creatures can hide in cracks and crevices, carpet, peeling wallpaper, and light fixtures, making detection difficult. Blackwell says there is no singular cure for bedbugs and the treatment process is time consuming and potentially costly for the homeowner, who sometimes has to get rid of furniture, mattresses, and clothes. “There is not a silver bullet cure for bed bugs, but among the ways to eliminate the pests is to encase the affected areas and starve them out, or use extreme measures of temperatures, like steam, to destroy them. Unfortunately, there is nothing sold in the grocery store that can eliminate bed bugs, so treatment typically requires a trained pest management professional.”

Blackwell indicates that there are several measures people can take to help prevent infestations. “Don’t buy used mattresses or box springs, and when you purchase new ones make sure they’re at least encased in plastic,” says Blackwell. “You should also pay attention to your surroundings when you travel, check the mattresses and sheets, and behind the headboard of the bed in your hotel room. Just to be safe, it’s also not a bad idea to have all of your clothing dry cleaned upon arrival from vacation, business travel, or college.”

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One of the oldest family-owned Terminix franchises, Terminix Triad has serviced customers throughout the Triad and northwestern North Carolina since 1931. Terminix Triad’s 190 associates serve 40,000 customers throughout a 17 county footprint by offering pest, termite, and moisture control solutions for the home and office. Parent company, Terminix International Co., is based in Memphis, Tenn., and has a worldwide network of locations, including 864 service centers throughout the United States and in 14 countries around the world. Terminix is a part of the ServiceMaster Quality Service Network. For more information, visit terminix-triad.com.