



# Our Insect Enemies



## Bed Bugs—The Unwelcome Travel Companion

(NAPSA)—Whether traveling for business or pleasure, many Americans take to the skies or hit the road for vacation during the summer months. In addition to packing luggage and double-checking itineraries, travelers should learn how to prevent unwelcome surprises, like bed bugs, from spoiling their trip or return home.

Pest control leader Orkin, Inc. has seen a rise in the number of bed bugs cases over the past several years, treating infestations in 48 states to date, versus only 43 states in 2004 and 35 states in 2003. Experts believe bed bugs' return and prevalence in the U.S. are due to an increase in international travel and the change to more targeted pest control applications. These factors, combined with increased media coverage, have also heightened awareness of these blood-sucking pests among the general public.

Contrary to popular belief, bed bugs are not a sanitation issue; they can be found in any hotel—luxury to inexpensive—and any home—big, small, clean or dirty—as well as dormitories and cruise ships.

“Once a bed bug finds its way indoors, it can move from room to room by traveling on clothing and luggage or through pipes and vacuum cleaners,” said Frank Meek, board-certified entomologist and technical director for Orkin, Inc. “This tendency to hitch-hike—as well as a bed bug’s ability to survive more than a year without a blood meal—make proper prevention and control steps even more important.”

While bed bugs are not known to carry disease, these apple-seed-sized pests can leave behind itchy, bloody welts on the skin.



**Don't let bed bugs spoil your travel. Remember to look for common signs of a bed bug infestation, such as dark brown or red spots on sheets and mattresses.**

Meek recommends travelers use the acronym, S.L.E.E.P., to remember the common signs of a bed bug infestation and to help prevent these pests from becoming an unwelcome travel companion or souvenir:

- Survey for signs of an infestation, such as dark brown or red spots on sheets.
- Lift and look for all bed bug hiding spots, including the mattress, headboard and furniture. Bed bugs are nocturnal and tend to hide near their food source—you!
- Elevate your belongings on a luggage rack away from the bed and wall, where bed bugs often hide behind headboards, picture frames and electrical outlet panels.
- Examine your luggage while repacking and when you return home. Remember, bed bugs are only  $\frac{3}{16}$  of an inch and can easily fit in cracks and crevices.
- Professionals can treat these resilient pests, which are extremely difficult to kill and can survive extreme temperatures.

For more information regarding bed bug prevention and control, visit [www.orkin.com/learning-center](http://www.orkin.com/learning-center).