

Bed Bug/Pest Policy

Goals

The problem of bed bugs is an ongoing challenge for libraries throughout the country. There is no definitive way to prevent bed bugs from entering any public facility. The Hampton Falls Free Library will take all reasonable steps to mitigate the threat posed by bed bugs.

This policy outlines our protocols to prevent, contain, and eliminate bed bugs and other pests in all materials and the building. Our goal is to maintain a healthy and clean environment for all library patrons and staff, and to protect the library's collections, equipment, and property. To this end, the library may restrict a patron's ability to borrow material and/or to visit the library when such use may jeopardize the health and cleanliness of library facility.

Regulations

1. Library patrons must cease to borrow materials from the library if they are experiencing a bed bug infestation in their residence until the infestation has been mitigated.
2. Materials with live or dead bed bugs returned by a patron will result in immediate suspension of library privileges for that patron and for any patrons in the same residence. Suspension will be lifted after the patron presents proof in writing that the residence has been successfully treated for and eradicated of bed bugs by a licensed and accredited pest control company.
3. If a patron discovers a live or dead bed bug, bed bug eggs, bed bug nymphs, feces or spotting associated with bed bugs in library materials, the patron must immediately do the following:
 - If the materials are **inside** of the Library: bring the materials to a staff member and inform them of the problem.
 - If the materials are **outside** of the Library and in the possession of the patron: place the materials into a sealable plastic bag and add tape to cover the sealed opening. Return the sealed materials directly to a staff member and inform them of the problem. **Patrons must not use the book drop to return materials with evidence of bed bugs.**
4. Patrons are prohibited from self-treating library materials that are suspected of containing bed bugs. Patrons will be held responsible for any damages to library materials during an attempted self-treatment. Successfully eradicating bed bugs requires professional procedures and equipment which has been contracted by the library.

5. Patrons donating items to the library, including for Book Sales events, must inspect materials for evidence of live or dead bed bugs prior to donating them. The library reserves the right to discard materials with signs of past or present bed bug activity.

Procedures

1. Staff will inspect all incoming materials, including those returned at the desk, in the book drop and through inter-library loan delivery, for signs that bed bugs are or have been present. These signs include live or dead bed bugs, bed bug eggs, bed bug nymphs, feces or spotting associated with bed bugs.
2. All items identified by library staff as potentially containing live or dead bed bugs in any stage shall be promptly quarantined in a sealable plastic bag. After treatment, all materials will be re-inspected.
3. Staff will inspect the items shelved or formerly shelved on either side, above, below, and behind the infested items for signs of bed bugs.
4. If the items in question were received from another library, staff will immediately contact the sending institution.
5. If the items in question were returned by a library patron, staff will inspect all other items borrowed by the patron and all other patrons in the same residence as the original patron for signs of bed bugs. The Director will contact the patron, explain the problem, discuss the basis of evidence that the patron is the source, and notify the patron of their suspension of library privileges and access.
6. Once the patron provides the Director with written proof that the bed bug situation has been remediated, library privileges will be restored. Written proof may include qualified extermination procedures conducted at the patron's residence. Confirming information may include copies of receipts for treatment and a letter from a licensed bed bug control company.

RIGHT OF APPEAL

Patrons may appeal a decision to limit or suspend privileges or the conditions placed on reinstatement by sending a written appeal to the Chair of Hampton Falls Free Library Trustees in care of the Library Director within 10 business days of the suspension notice. The decision of the Library Trustees is final.

Originally adopted by the library board of trustees: December 26, 2019.
Reviewed and approved on April 17, 2024.