



News & Notes

A review of bed bug news and product information from industry suppliers.

Allergy Technologies: Controlling Public Health Pests Even More Important Now

With stay-at-home orders recently having been in place in most states, public health structural pests like bed bugs, cockroaches and rodents are proliferating because of increased accessibility to food sources and disruptions to their environment. All of these pests contribute to worsening asthma conditions and related breathing complications, which may lead to more severe cases of COVID-19 for the 25 million asthmatics in the U.S.

Although pest control has been deemed an essential service by Homeland Security and the vast majority of states during the COVID-19 pandemic, concerns over maintaining social distancing and possible exposure to the coronavirus has slowed, or stopped, treatments for these structural pests, Allergy Technologies reports.

“The implementation of stay-at-home mandates has created a fertile breeding ground for bed bugs, roaches and rodents. This is especially true for multi-occupant, assisted living and hospitality properties,” said Joseph Latino, president of Allergy Technologies. “There is a need to strike the ‘right’ balance between preserving public health through preventive and focused pest control, while not causing

undue exposure risk to clients during the COVID-19 pandemic.”

What follows are control suggestions from Allergy Technologies:

Bed bugs. Bed bugs require frequent blood meals to grow into adulthood and reproduce. Within several months, one pregnant female can result in more than 30,000 bed bugs. If left unaddressed, bed bugs will spread throughout a facility, affecting the lives of neighboring tenants in multi-occupant environments.

Bed bugs also prefer to feed while undisturbed; for example, when people are sleeping or resting for extended periods on a couch, while watching TV or playing video games. Stay-at-home social behavior has provided plenty of opportunities for bed bugs to feed. Sadly, those afflicted with coronavirus, who are too sick to get out of bed, are those who are most likely to be affected by bed bugs. Resulting bites, when repeatedly scratched, can result in infections that further complicate the condition of the patient.

Hotels are also increasingly being repurposed as locations for the homeless, quarantine sites and temporary housing for health-care workers and emergency first responders. Bed bug introductions will rise substantially without implementing prevention and affecting timely treatments. While hotels are being returned to service and are undergoing sanitization, they should consider in-

cluding bed bug detection, treatment and instituting preventive strategies. These measures are significantly easier to enact, less disruptive and less expensive while the hotel is unoccupied. Taking proactive steps now to treat and prevent bed bugs will create great savings down the road, Allergy Technologies reports.

SOLUTION. If PMPs are not being engaged to control these public health pests, residents are likely to resort to do-it-yourself pest control, including the improper use of household chemicals, which are ineffective and often dangerous. “Many of these chemicals are highly flammable and can compromise those with breathing difficulties,” Latino added. “And some treatments may actually enhance the resistance of these pests to traditional chemical treatments, making treatment less effective and more time-consuming.”

Pest management professionals, using well-established COVID-19 hygiene guidelines, can implement prevention programs that will significantly reduce the problems caused by these public health pests.

Untreated pests can spread to infest entire buildings over several months, resulting in extensive and costly treatments; significant facility-wide disruption; and unnecessarily prolonged interactions between staff, residents and pest managers which is a problem in today’s



environment. “Delaying treatment and the implementation of preventive programs has created an explosion of infestations, which dangerously increases the levels of allergens for residents subject to asthma and related allergies,” added Gus Carey, founder of Allergy Technologies. “Residents of these facilities, particularly in typically underserved affordable housing, should not have to suffer the health problems, psychological distress and disruptions caused by these pests.”

In trying to control the delicate balance between the short-term needs of preventing the spread of COVID-19 and securing public safety through responsible pest control, the unintended hazards of deferring treatments for public health pests must be recognized. “Even in the short-

and medium term, adopting preventive strategies now, using well-documented IPM-based protocols, will reduce the need for contact time between residents and pest management service providers by 50-65 percent,” Latino concluded.

Allergy Technologies says it is committed to the creation and manufacture of innovative, effective and consumer-friendly products and programs addressing major issues in both pest control and healthcare. *ActiveGuard* Mattress Liners are available for purchase by pest control professionals and distributors; hoteliers; colleges and universities; property management; federal, state and local housing; cruise lines; and homeowners. For more information, visit www.allergytechnologies.com. **PCT**
Source: Allergy Technologies