

Bedbug Inspection and Quarantine Procedures

Public libraries are open to all, and much like the flu or the common cold, coming into contact with some transmittable conditions, including bedbugs, is unavoidable. Therefore, every effort is taken to minimize the risk of transmission to patrons and staff.

Facility Inspection and Treatment

Albion District Library is inspected for bedbugs by canine bi-monthly, and treated as needed, through our negotiated contract with Orkin. This is a valid, though not inexpensive, facility expenditure as bedbug infestation can be considered a public health concern. Regular inspection is a prevention measure that insures that infestations are caught and treated as early as possible to minimize negative impacts to the patrons, staff, materials, facility, and the Library's reputation in the community. Though bedbugs are very common, it is, unfortunately, misunderstood and stigmatized. All pest inspections and treatments are scheduled during closed hours. Treated areas may need to be vacated for a period of time after treatment.

Orkin treatment is scheduled the same day as each inspection and can be canceled in cases of negative inspection results.

If activity is detected during the inspection, those shelves are emptied into double-layered trash bags and sealed until they can be treated (see *Heat Treatment* section). Those shelves are noted and posted for staff at the service desks for reference, so that items being returned by patrons to those shelves can be inspected and treated when they are returned to circulation. An email with this same information is sent to all staff. The affected shelves, once emptied, are immediately wiped down with 91% rubbing alcohol. A discrete sign is posted in those areas, with a request for patrons to "please excuse our mess" and "looking for an item, please ask at the service desk."

Daily Material Inspection

Staff skim through all materials when they are loaned out to patrons and when they are returned for damage, including marking, ripped or missing pages/covers, water warping, food stains, mold, pet damage, and signs of bedbugs. Damage is noted and addressed at the time. If the damage is consistent with regular wear and does not impact the usefulness and appeal of the item, it is noted and returned to circulation. If the damage is significant and inconsistent with regular wear, the item will be removed from circulation at that time. The patron may be billed if the damage can be reliably linked to their usage.

All circulation staff are trained on what bedbug infestation looks like in library materials, especially in books using the ALA resource "Don't Let the Bed Bugs Bite" by Sarah Kittrell of Wichita Public Library (<http://www.ala.org/pla/sites/ala.org.pla/files/content/onlinelearning/>)

webinars/archive/PLA_Kittrell_Dont-let-the-bed-bugs-bite_Final.pdf). Any items that show these signs are quarantined and heat treated (see *Quarantine* and *Heat Treatment* sections).

If multiple items from the same household are suspect, then the Director will open discussions with the patron on the concern and may suspend borrowing privileges until the home is certified remediated by a pest control company. In such circumstances, previously borrowed items are pulled from the shelves, inspected, and may be quarantined and treated along with the other items on that shelf.

Quarantine (“Bakery Boxes”)

Items suspected of bedbugs are immediately quarantined in gasketed bins we call “bakery boxes.” This lingo is used to avoid using the word “bedbug,” which may cause an unneeded panic on the part of patrons, and psychosomatic itching on the part of staff members. Heavily suspected items may be further isolated in large ziptop freezer bags before being placed into the bakery boxes. Latex-free gloves are readily available to staff to use during this process.

Additional bins or full bins awaiting treatment can be stored on the lower shelves of the wire cart holding the heat treatment unit (“the Bakery”).

Heat Treatment/Zappbug Heater (“The Bakery”)

When a batch of sufficient size is collected, the items are placed into the unit on top of the oven racks added to facilitate better flow of the hot air around the items being treated. The metal of the racks has not damaged/melted any of the many books or DVDs we’ve treated. Latex-free gloves and disposable poly aprons are readily available to staff to use during this process.

We build a spot in the center of the pile of items for the wireless thermometer, and the unit is set to “bake” for the time described in the manual. In general, we aim for 120 degrees F, according to the remote temperature monitor, for at least 15 minutes, though 1 hour is not unusual. We “bake” the items until “they are done in the middle.” The unit is then shut off and allowed to cool.

Post-Treatment Inspection

When the items have cooled enough to allow handling, each item is inspected for damage by staff. Items without noticeable damage receive a small mark on the title page (for us this a checkmark inside a circle) and the date of treatment. These items are returned to circulation. Items with noticeable and intrusive damage are weeded. The Director has discretion on whether replacement of these items may be billed to the patron.