

# There's No Spring Break with Bed Bugs

By **JOHN CULOTTA**

Pest management professionals (PMPs) know better than anyone that bed bugs are persistent. Not only have they been a pest to reckon with since their resurgence more than 15 years ago, they also remain one of the most difficult bugs to eradicate with a single treatment — a fact that often leads to frustrated clients.

John Culotta

With Spring on its way, along with a bump in international travel and vacations, we can expect another spike in U.S. bed bug outbreaks and calls for PMPs to treat them. That makes it a good time to review two important lessons every PMP should know to protect themselves and calm their clients.

## 1. Review Contracts

What a contract contains matters. When used for bed bug service, contracts should never include guarantees, but always specify that multiple treatments may be required. In this way, you set realistic expectations and provide less room for client dissatisfaction. The right wording also makes it easier for you — and your insurance company — to defend you in the event a claim is filed.

It helps to avoid using a one-size-fits-all approach to contracts. Just as different pests require different treatments, so do they require different contract language. For bed bugs, you should clearly describe expectations for your treatment, and if you're using heat treatment, provide ample warnings about personal property that should be removed.

Examine your contract language to remove any unclear language or unnecessary industry jargon that may be confusing to clients and take the time to talk through the contract with your clients so they understand the expectations and risks. Investing this time in the beginning can prevent a lot of headaches down the road.

## 2. Manage Expectations

Managing client expectations doesn't begin and end with your contracts. It starts with what is in your marketing materials and on your website. Just like contracts, this is a place to avoid making guarantees and promises you can't always keep — but clients can use when filing a claim against you.

From the first phone call and visit with a client, you can manage expectations by discussing the reality of treating bed bugs, including the possibility of repeat treatments. If you're using heat treatment, remind them of recommended measures to protect artwork, record collections and other personal property.

Finally, don't forget the follow-up. A week or so after a treatment is complete, call the client to learn about their level of satisfaction. Customer service and follow-through can help relieve anxiety, especially if a second treatment is necessary. This time and attention can pay dividends by preventing costly claims.

---

**John Culotta** is program manager of PCOpro, the pest control operator program at [Brownyard Group](#), a leading administrator providing specialized insurance coverage for select industry groups. He can be reached at [jculotta@brownyard.com](mailto:jculotta@brownyard.com) or by calling 800-645-5820, ext. 122.

**PMP's Direct To You** provides pest management professionals with educational refreshers on timely and critical topics essential to operational success. This content is not be used as a substitute for obtaining legal advice from an attorney licensed to practice where you live. Look for the content-rich PMP Direct To You archives at [mypmp.net/direct-to-you-archive](http://mypmp.net/direct-to-you-archive).

This newsletter was produced by North Coast Media's content marketing staff in collaboration with Brownyard Group.

[View Details!](#)

**VIEW MORE DIRECT TO YOU COLUMNS**

**VIEW THE LAST ISSUE OF THE INSURANCE GUIDE**

You are subscribed to *DTY: Insurance* as @{Email Name}@.

**Forward to a friend | Change your subscription preferences | New subscriber sign-up**

If you wish to leave this mailing list, simply **unsubscribe**. | Refer to our **Privacy Policy**.

*Pest Management Professional* is a property of North Coast Media, LLC.

1360 E. Ninth St., 10th Floor, Cleveland, OH 44114

© 2019 **North Coast Media**. All Rights Reserved.

Reproduction in whole or in part is prohibited without written permission.