

Before You Hire an Exterminator...

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Bedbugs are difficult to eliminate and generally require the services of a professional. The Better Business Bureau recommends doing research to ensure that you're hiring a reputable pest-control company. Some tips:

- Check the company's background through the BBB on its website, www.bbb.org.
- Make sure the exterminator has sufficient training and certifications. Ideally, the company also will be a member of a national or local trade association.
- Ask about liability insurance. Find out how the company is covered, and how you will be reimbursed if they happen to break any of your belongings or damage your home.
- Make sure that you completely understand the extent of the infestation as well as the possible remedies and side effects of any chemicals used.
- If you engage the services of a professional exterminator, read your contract carefully. Don't merely take the word of the sales representative for terms of the agreement. Pay close attention to any warranties or termination fees if entering into an extended contract for monitoring or future services.
- Check the company's license. Pest-control companies must be licensed by the Ohio Department of Agriculture. The license ensures that the person or company has received the right training to battle pests and is aware of proper safety requirements to handle pesticides.
- Get more than one quote. Talk to a number of companies and get several bids before you choose a company. Make sure you do your research on bedbugs first so you'll know what kind of questions to ask.
- Hire a professional. Very few over-the-counter insecticides are effective for killing bedbugs. The ones that do kill bedbugs only work if you spray them directly on the bugs. They do not kill bedbugs that are hiding behind the baseboard or under the carpet. Total-release aerosol insecticides such as bug bombs will kill a small number of the bedbugs, but they also might scatter the bugs through your home.

Sources: Better Business Bureau, Ohio Department of Agriculture, Central Ohio Bed Bug Task Force.