

Notes on California Law and Bed Bugs

Contact your landlord if you suspect that your rental might have bed bugs.

California law requires a landlord to provide safe and habitable premises. The tenant is required to keep the rental property clean and to dispose of garbage properly.

Contact your landlord or property manager immediately if you suspect that your rental might have bed bugs. Bed bugs are difficult and costly to control. The sooner they are detected, the easier it is to control them.

Your landlord cannot evict you for requesting assistance with bed bugs.

California law prohibits a landlord from retaliating against a tenant if the tenant:

- Calls a governmental agency for an inspection
- Organizes other tenants
- Requests that the landlord make repairs (or in this case, treat bed bugs)

Who pays for bed bug treatment?

Generally, it is the landlord's responsibility to pay for the cost of controlling bed bugs and other pests, but, in some cases, the tenant might have to pay.

Contact an attorney if you have questions about taking legal action against your landlord related to bed bugs.

California Civil Code §1941.1, Landlord Obligations

California state law requires a landlord to provide and maintain the following:

- Weather protection at the roof, exterior walls, windows and doors;
- Plumbing and gas facilities
- An adequate supply of hot and cold running water
- Heat
- Electrical system, including lighting, wiring, and equipment working
- Clean Premises, free of rubbish, filth, garbage and vermin
- Adequate trash containers
- Floors, stairways and railings maintained

California Civil Code §1941.2, Tenant Obligations

California state law requires the tenant to

- Keep the unit clean and sanitary
- Dispose of rubbish in a sanitary manner
- Properly use plumbing and electrical fixtures
- Not willfully destroy the unit
- Use the rooms for their intended use

The law requires a tenant to personally repair damage caused by their own acts or neglect.

- If the tenant "substantially violated" the tenant's obligations, and
- The violation "substantially contributes" to the defective condition.

Requirements of the California rental property bed bug law (AB 551)

The landlord cannot show, rent, or lease a unit that he or she knows is infested with bed bugs.

The landlord must provide new tenants with a written notice providing information about bed bugs and how to report an infestation.

Tenants must cooperate with inspections for bed bugs.

The landlord must notify a tenant in writing of the results of any bed bug inspection in their unit. If bed bugs are found in common areas, all tenants must be notified. Notification in either case must be done within 2 business days of the landlord's receipt of the results.

The pest control company will be most successful if their technicians follow current best management practices for bed bug control, such as those created by the National Pest Management Association. These can be found at www.pestworld.org

