

§6021-A. Treatment of bedbug infestation

1. Definition. As used in this section, unless the context otherwise indicates, "pest control agent" means a commercial applicator of pesticides certified pursuant to Title 22, section 1471-D. [PL 2009, c. 566, §8 (NEW).]

2. Landlord duties. A landlord has the following duties.

A. Upon written or oral notice from a tenant that a dwelling unit may have a bedbug infestation, the landlord shall within 5 days conduct an inspection of the unit for bedbugs. [PL 2009, c. 566, §8 (NEW).]

B. Upon a determination that an infestation of bedbugs does exist in a dwelling unit, the landlord shall within 10 days contact a pest control agent pursuant to paragraph C. [PL 2009, c. 566, §8 (NEW).]

C. A landlord shall take reasonable measures to effectively identify and treat the bedbug infestation as determined by a pest control agent. The landlord shall employ a pest control agent that carries current liability insurance to promptly treat the bedbug infestation. [PL 2009, c. 566, §8 (NEW).]

D. Before renting a dwelling unit, a landlord shall disclose to a prospective tenant if an adjacent unit or units are currently infested with or are being treated for bedbugs. Upon request from a tenant or prospective tenant, a landlord shall disclose the last date that the dwelling unit the landlord seeks to rent or an adjacent unit or units were inspected for a bedbug infestation and found to be free of a bedbug infestation. [PL 2009, c. 566, §8 (NEW).]

E. A landlord may not offer for rent a dwelling unit that the landlord knows or suspects is infested with bedbugs. [PL 2009, c. 566, §8 (NEW).]

F. A landlord shall offer to make reasonable assistance available to a tenant who is not able to comply with requested bedbug inspection or control measures under subsection 3, paragraph C. The landlord shall disclose to the tenant what the cost may be for the tenant's compliance with the requested bedbug inspection or control measure. After making this disclosure, the landlord may provide financial assistance to the tenant to prepare the unit for bedbug treatment. A landlord may charge the tenant a reasonable amount for any such assistance, subject to a reasonable repayment schedule, not to exceed 6 months, unless an extension is otherwise agreed to by the landlord and the tenant. This paragraph may not be construed to require the landlord to provide the tenant with alternate lodging or to pay to replace the tenant's personal property. [PL 2011, c. 405, §9 (AMD).]
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3. Tenant duties. A tenant has the following duties.

A. A tenant shall promptly notify a landlord when the tenant knows of or suspects an infestation of bedbugs in the tenant's dwelling unit. [PL 2009, c. 566, §8 (NEW).]

B. Upon receiving reasonable notice as set forth in section 6025, including reasons for and scope of the request for access to the premises, a tenant shall grant the landlord of the dwelling unit, the landlord's agent or the landlord's pest control agent and its employees access to the unit for purposes of an inspection for or control of the infestation of bedbugs. The initial inspection may include only a visual inspection and manual inspection of the tenant's bedding and upholstered furniture. Employees of the pest control agent may inspect items other than bedding and upholstered furniture when such an inspection is considered reasonable by the pest control agent. If the pest control agent finds bedbugs in the dwelling unit or in an adjoining unit, the pest control agent may have additional access to the tenant's personal belongings as determined reasonable by the pest control agent. [PL 2009, c. 566, §8 (NEW).]

C. Upon receiving reasonable notice as set forth in section 6025, a tenant shall comply with reasonable measures to eliminate and control a bedbug infestation as set forth by the landlord and

the pest control agent. The tenant's unreasonable failure to completely comply with the pest control measures results in the tenant's being financially responsible for all pest control treatments of the dwelling unit arising from the tenant's failure to comply. [PL 2009, c. 566, §8 (NEW).]

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4. Remedies. The following remedies are available.

A. The failure of a landlord to comply with the provisions of this section constitutes a finding that the landlord has unreasonably failed under the circumstances to take prompt, effective steps to repair or remedy a condition that endangers or materially impairs the health or safety of a tenant pursuant to section 6021, subsection 3. [PL 2009, c. 566, §8 (NEW).]

B. A landlord who fails to comply with the provisions of this section is liable for a penalty of \$250 or actual damages, whichever is greater, plus reasonable attorney's fees. [PL 2009, c. 566, §8 (NEW).]

C. A landlord may commence an action in accordance with section 6030-A and obtain relief against a tenant who fails to provide reasonable access or comply with reasonable requests for inspection or treatment or otherwise unreasonably fails to comply with reasonable bedbug control measures as set forth in this section. For the purposes of section 6030-A and this section, if a court finds that a tenant has unreasonably failed to comply with this section, the court may issue a temporary order or interim relief pursuant to Title 5, section 4654 to carry out the provisions of this section, including but not limited to:

- (1) Granting the landlord access to the premises for the purposes set forth in this section;
- (2) Granting the landlord the right to engage in bedbug control measures; and
- (3) Requiring the tenant to comply with specified bedbug control measures or assessing the tenant with costs and damages related to the tenant's noncompliance.

Any order granting the landlord access to the premises must be served upon the tenant at least 24 hours before the landlord enters the premises. [PL 2009, c. 566, §8 (NEW).]

D. In any action of forcible entry and detainer under section 6001, there is a rebuttable presumption that the action was commenced in retaliation against the tenant if, within 6 months before the commencement of the action, the tenant has asserted the tenant's rights pursuant to this section. The rebuttable presumption of retaliation does not apply unless the tenant asserted that tenant's rights pursuant to this section prior to being served with the eviction notice. There is no presumption of retaliation if the action for forcible entry and detainer is brought for failure to pay rent or for causing substantial damage to the premises. [PL 2011, c. 405, §10 (AMD).]

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SECTION HISTORY

PL 2009, c. 566, §8 (NEW). PL 2011, c. 405, §§9, 10 (AMD).

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