**BEDBUG PREVENTION AND ELIMINATION POLICY**

This policy is designed in accordance with HUD guidance PIH 2012-17 on the growing problem of bedbugs and proper elimination of bedbug infestations. This policy outlines the responsibilities of Pecan Grove/Kirbyville Housing Authority (KHA) as well as the rights and responsibilities of the tenants in dealing with bedbug education and elimination procedures.

Bedbug infestations can be a serious problem. Public Housing properties are not immune to bedbug infestations. This policy addresses the importance of partnership between KHA and tenant.

Prevention and elimination of bedbugs can only be accomplished through KHA and tenant cooperation. KHA expects tenant cooperation in the process of education, inspection, detection, and elimination of bedbugs. In turn, the tenant may expect fairness in KHA’ s enforcement of these guidelines.

The following are procedures for the prevention of bedbugs:

Tenants

* Check for bedbugs (and any other pests) in luggage and clothes when returning home from a trip;
* Look for bedbugs or signs of infestation on secondhand items before bringing the items home;
* Clean all items within a bedbug infested living area;
* Reduce clutter where bedbugs can hide;
* Eliminate bedbug habitats;
* Physically remove bedbugs through cleaning;

KHA

* Raise awareness through education on prevention of bedbugs;
* Provide orientation for new tenants and staff, and post signs and handouts regarding bedbug prevention.
* Correctly identify the pest;
* Inspect infested areas, plus surrounding living spaces;
* Use pesticides carefully according to the label directions; and,
* Follow up on inspections and possible treatments
* Keep records – including dates and locations where pests are found;

Tenants will be required to immediately report to KHA the suspicion of possible bedbugs in a housing unit or other areas of the property. Tenants are the first line of defense against bedbug infestations and are encouraged to create living environments that deter bedbugs. Units may be inspected for unreasonable amounts of clutter that create hiding places for bedbugs.

Tenants should be advised of the following:

* KHA shall not deny tenancy to a potential resident on the basis of the tenant having experienced a prior bedbug infestation, nor may an owner give residential preference to any tenant based on a response to a question regarding prior exposure to bedbugs.
* A tenant reporting bedbugs will receive expeditious response and attention by KHA, but shall be advised that inspection and, if necessary, treatment of bedbugs may take time to schedule. Within 24 hours of receipt of the tenant report, KHA should make contact with the tenant, provide the tenant with information about bed bugs, and discuss measures the tenant may be able to take in the unit before the inspection is performed.
* The inspections should occur within three calendar days of the tenant report when possible. The inspection will cover the unit reporting the infestation and surrounding apartments; consisting of connecting units above, below, left and right (where applicable). Upon inspection, KHA or a qualified third party trained in bedbug detection should determine if bed bugs are present. KHA and/or their contractor may enter the unit to perform such activities, in accordance with the lease.
* If an infestation is suspected but cannot be verified, KHA shall re-inspect the unit(s) periodically over the next several months.
* If bedbug infestation is found in the unit, the tenant may normally expect treatment to begin within five days of the inspection, though depending on the form of treatment, this may not be possible. Tenants should be advised that treatment may take up to several weeks.
* Tenants are expected to cooperate with the treatment efforts by allowing for heat treatment of clothing and furniture (or other available methods) and refraining from placement of infested furniture or other items in common areas such as shared porches or hallways. Tenant cooperation has been shown to expedite the control of bedbugs and to prevent spreading of infestations.
* The tenant is required to follow the instructions provided by the professional exterminator for proper treatment of all personal items including pets.
* The tenant will not be expected to contribute to the cost of the professional exterminator upon an initial discovery and complete, successful treatment of a bed bug infestation. At the discretion of KHA, any future occurrence/re-occurrence of such infestations shall be grounds for termination of lease and eviction and charges to the tenant for KHA’s actual cost of treatment.
* The tenant will not be reimbursed the cost of any additional expense to the household, such as purchase of new furniture, clothing or cleaning services.
* KHA retains the right to terminate resident’s tenancy and require residents to vacate the rental unit in the event that the:

1. Resident’s action or inaction prevents treatment of an infestation;
2. Resident fails to comply with the requirements of this policy.

If KHA terminates the tenancy according to this policy and tenant vacates within seven (7) days of such notice of termination, the tenant shall be released from any future financial obligations pursuant to the Lease (other than any back charges already owed before the infestation was discovered by, and/or reported to the office), unless the infestation is caused or worsened as a result of the tenant’s actions or inactions, or as a result of tenant preventing or hindering treatment.

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