

## Bed bugs crawl back to NYU residence halls this semester

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by Anna Sanders

Some NYU students may find themselves with unwelcome roommates this year: bed bugs. The notorious pest has made its annual comeback, this time in greater numbers.

Bell Environmental Services, a New Jersey pest control company, recently reported an increase in bed bugs throughout the tri-state area, specifically in college dorms and residential housing in New York City.

"There's more people reporting bed bug problems and looking for us to eradicate their problem," said Veronica Sanchez, a Bell Environmental customer service representative.

Despite the reported increase in bed bugs in the city, Tom Ellett, NYU's associate vice president of Student Affairs, said NYU has experienced only a small number of bed bug infestations in the past few years.

NYU officials work on a case-by-case basis and follow a protocol to manage and prevent the spread of bed bugs within residence halls, Ellett said.

Although there have been just two confirmed cases of bed bugs in NYU housing so far this year, Sanchez said the risk of bed bug infestations increases significantly in college residence halls.

"It's a place where there's a lot of people, and people from many different places around the world," Sanchez said.

She added that bed bugs cling onto personal belongings in order to get from one place to another, making it easy for an infestation to spread not only in residence halls, but also when students return home for breaks and inadvertently bring bed bugs with them.

"If you have them, you want to treat it as soon as possible," Sanchez said. "Early detection is the key to eradicating the problem."

Ellett said if students believe they have bed bugs in their room, they should contact their resident assistant and the Building Resource Center. Students are advised to look for fecal droppings on their sheets and live bed bugs in the seams of mattresses, near the base of the bed or around the box spring.

Once bed bugs are confirmed to be in a room, everything in the room must be serviced with instant-freeze technology, Sanchez said.

"It kills the bed bugs and acts on contact by freezing them at 140 degrees below zero," she said, adding that the two recommended treatments cost about \$900, though other students have successfully removed bed bugs from dormitories by getting rid of bedding or washing bedding materials at high temperatures.

Tisch freshman Irene Hartmann believes the university should also take some responsibility for bed bug infestations if and when they occur.

"If you're practicing those common rules of basic hygiene and you still get the bed bugs, it's somewhat the dorm's fault and should be their responsibility to clean it up," Hartmann said.