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In Lieu of Recent Bed Bug Lawsuits Experts Warn This is Just the Beginning of What's to Come

Landlords Are Taking Notice With the Increase of Bed Bug Lawsuits Across the Country

Lawrenceville, NJ – Experts warn that the recent \$800,000 record payout awarded to a Maryland woman is just the beginning of what's to come in bed bug litigation. There is certain sense of worry among tenants and landlords alike as bed bug lawsuits continue to increase. While the Maryland case serves as a catalyst for other consumers to file suit, it is also a wake-up call for landlords and property manager to ensure that their facilities are bed bug free.

Although bed bug lawsuits nationwide have increased exponentially over the past few years, it is the most recent bed bug settlement that has landlords taking notice. Who becomes financially responsible, the property managers or the tenant has become the hot button among bed bug litigations. Property managers can argue that tenants are the source of introduction, while tenants can argue that property managers may be withholding information regarding a preexisting bed bug infestation.

Many states however have passed legislation, detailing very specifically that a property manager is financially responsible for correcting a bed bug problem, should one arise. However, in states where legislation has not been passed, all types of problems are taking place and landlords are trying to shift the responsibility onto the tenant via the lease. The problem with landlords trying to hand off the financial responsibility to a tenant is twofold. One, there is no definitive way to guarantee an apartment or unit is completely bed bug free upon move in, and two, bed bugs spread very easily from one unit to another, therefore making it very difficult to pinpoint the root of an infestation.

“I think passing the cost of treatment off to tenants via the lease is a legal ticking time bomb,” says Jeff White of BedBug Central, and an expert used in bed bug litigations. “I think there's going to be a lot of attention paid to property managers that have not handled things properly and multiple tenants that have suffered the consequences as a result. In the next two years I think it's going to be a complete circus when it comes to bed bug litigation and property management.”

According to a recent [Huffington Post article](#) the following are some other notable civil litigation cases that have received media attention:



- In May, 300 residents of apartment buildings in Iowa got the go-ahead to file a [class-action lawsuit against landlords](#) for an alleged bed bug scourge (according to the Des Moines Register).
- In January, USA Today reported that a Spring Valley, NY woman [filed a \\$7 million suit](#) against Holiday Inn's parent company after allegedly being bitten by bed bugs on a visit to a North Carolina Holiday Inn.

Lawyer Tom Campbell of Birmingham, AL said, "There are enough lawyers who are getting trained so that people will be able to find lawyers quickly and find a way to get relief."

PMP Magazine's June 2012 issue featured a Bed Bug Legal Supplement, which included a variety of information for the Pest Management Professionals on avoiding litigations. The supplement offers advice on the do's and don'ts of bed bug contracts, survey results, as well as an exclusive interview with Paul J. Bello. Bello is a longtime PMP and industry consultant who has served as a witness in several high-profile bed bug cases. This issue was full of helpful information for PMP's on how to protect themselves, their businesses and their clients from legal liabilities.

It is apparent that something needs to be done and a strong movement needs to be made to prevent landlords from renting units which are known to have a bed bug infestation. The courts will continue to see case after case until something is put into effect to prevent a landlord from withholding bed bug related information for a prospective tenant.

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Helpful links:

Huffington Post article: http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2013/06/03/maryland-bedbug-lawsuit-faika-shaaban_n_3378001.html

PMP Magazine June 2012 Bed Bug Legal Supplement:

http://www.zoecon.com/uploads/resources/4ffdcd04cf6a3_PMP%202012%20Bed%20Bug%20Guide.pdf

BedBug Central: www.bedbugcentral.com

Jeff White: <http://bedbugcentral.com/about/profile.cfm/jeff-white>

About BedBug Central

BedBug Central serves as the nation's most authoritative information resource and website available to the public for information concerning bed bugs and bed bug related issues concerning health, prevention, and treatment methods.