

SHARP INCREASE IN BED BUGS BITING AT THE HEELS OF THE HOSPITALITY INDUSTRY

Reports of an increase in bed bug activity has sent waves of concern through the South African industry, especially given the fact that the FIFA 2010 Soccer World Cup is in full swing, making this one of the most important seasons for the hospitality industry.

"We've seen an increase of more than 300% in bed bug activity since March 2009, and this trend is predominantly over the warmer months, confirming that bed bugs are a concern for hotel, guesthouse and other accommodation owners. If we compare the income generated through the treatment of bedbugs in February 2009 with that of February 2010, we have seen an increase of nearly 500%"

says Nathalie Leblond, marketing manager of Rentokil Pest Control.

Bed bugs are pests that conceal themselves in tight cracks and crevices and can be found hiding in a variety of places; from the seams of mattresses to shoes and electrical switch plates. Bed bugs are nocturnal, feeding on any warm-blooded animal, although it has been found that they prefer to dine on humans.

There has been an ongoing debate on whether bed bug bites are a cause for concern and according to the American Society for Healthcare Environmental services, bed bugs do not transfer any communicable diseases to humans, however their bites can become red and itchy or cause an allergic reaction.

Rentokil offers these important tips to help prevent bed bug infestations:

- Advise guests to vacuum their suitcases after returning from a vacation.
- Housekeeping staff should check bed sheets for tell-tale signs of blood spots on a regular basis.
- Advise your guests to consider buying a large plastic trash bag in which to keep their suitcase during hotel stays.
- On arrival guests should place their suitcases on a metal suitcase rack or in the bathroom until they have checked for bed bugs.
- Know what you're looking for: small brown blood spots on the bed linen.
- When conducting an inspection use a flashlight, as these critters are very good at hide and seek. Pay close attention to the seams of mattresses, headboards, sheets and box springs.