

Best Practices - Pest Issues

Date Revised May 2020

Subject: Pests

Problem or Question: How should our assessors deal with pest issues when they encounter them in the field? What are the health risks? How do we identify them and what is allowable within WAP?

Discussion:

When pest are encountered assessment staff should consider the following:

- Cost threshold to mitigate pest infestations is generally limited to \$50.00 in labor and materials.
- WPN 17-7 provides the following guidance in regards to Pest:
 - Action/Allowability
 - Pest removal is allowed only where infestation would prevent weatherization.
 - Infestation of pests may be cause for deferral where it cannot be reasonably removed or pose H&S concern for workers.
 - Screening of windows and points of access, and incorporating pest exclusion into air sealing practices to prevent intrusion is allowed.
 - Testing
 - Assessment of presence and degree of infestation and risk to worker.
 - Client Education
 - Inform client in writing of observed condition and associated risks.
 - When deferral is necessary, provide information in writing describing conditions that must be met in order for weatherization to commence.
- WPN 17-7 FAQs provide the following information links to provide additional pest information such as pest identification, associated health risk, control, etc.:
 - Pests in your area locator: <http://www.pestworld.org/pest-guide/>
 - EPA Pest Control: <https://www.epa.gov/safepestcontrol/got-pests-control-them-safely>
 - County offices pest links: <http://npic.orst.edu/pest/countyext.htm>

It is important that assessment staff understand that pest infestation can happen and are sometimes out of the clients control. Mild pest issues can often be eliminated with normal weatherization work such as air sealing, installing screens, replacing unscreened attic vents, etc. while severe infestations may require unit deferral until the infestation issue can be resolved. Each agency should educate staff on what triggers a pest infestation deferral and which limited infestation treatments are allowed within program guidelines,

Summary:

If severe pest infestations are present during the initial assessment that would prevent weatherization, pose health & safety concerns for workers/occupants, or removal is not a viable/cost-effective option, deferral of the unit should be considered until the infestation issue can be resolved. In the majority of cases, resolving the infestations issue will require the client to get involved by taking out and containing of garbage, cleaning, or treating the pest infestation itself. As with any deferral take plenty of photos, provide robust written documentation, and use appropriate deferral procedures if unable to weatherize the home. Always inform the client of observed conditions and associated risks.