

**NEW
YORK**

**VS
BED
BUGS**

BED BUGS IN NEW YORK CITY
A CITIZEN'S GUIDE TO THE PROBLEM

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About New York vs Bed Bugs

New York vs Bed Bugs is a policy advocacy organization formed in New York City in March of 2008. The organization's members are concerned citizens who have fought, and continue to fight, bed bug infestations. Advisers include urban pest management professionals and entomologists.

Bed bugs are a serious quality of life issue. Bed bug infestations exact a heavy physical and emotional toll, burden our families and businesses, diminish our productivity, and make our society poorer.

We believe that the current levels of infestation in our city merit a determination of public health concern and that coordinated action can stop the spread.

A bed bug task force for New York City

Our overarching objective is a comprehensive bed bug control plan for the city. We believe that the best vehicle to achieve this objective is a city-wide bed bug task force—modeled on the bed bug task forces established in cities like Cincinnati and Toronto—that can draw upon the expertise and cooperation of multiple agencies, relevant stakeholders, and urban pest management experts to investigate and devise solutions to specific challenges.

For more information, please visit <http://newyorkvsbedbugs.org/>.

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Bed bugs in New York City

An insect pest like no other

Bed bugs are blood-sucking insects that have been on the rise worldwide for at least the past decade. They can hide in cracks and crevices in furniture or objects in a home as well as in the structure itself, including walls, floors and window sills. Early-stage infestations are very hard to detect even for pest control professionals.

Our society lacks effective and widely-deployable, inexpensive control methods. Cleaning alone is insufficient to control infestations. Pesticides alone are inadequate, especially in light of pesticide resistance in some bed bug populations.

Bed bugs spread easily between floors and apartments in apartment buildings via unsealed walls, plumbing, and electrical and heating conduits.

Treating a single infested apartment in a building, or treating apartments serially based solely on complaints, is often an inappropriate strategy that fails to eradicate infestations and stop the spread. Building residents—lacking notice of infestations in the building and lacking awareness of bed bugs—may not detect an infestation that has spread from a treated apartment to an untreated apartment until the infestation is advanced and there are obvious signs. Further complicating detection is the complexity of allergic reactions to bed bug bites; allergic reactions may evolve over time and some people simply may not react to bites at all.¹

Poorly controlled bed bug infestations generate secondary infestations by the active spread of bed bugs to adjoining apartments and spaces and by the passive, accidental transfer of bed bugs to new locations on furniture, clothing and personal effects.

Improperly discarded bed bug-infested furniture and trash also fuel the spread.



DIY bed bug warning on discarded sofa
© mangy_cur



A bed bug nymph gorging on blood
© AMNH Sorkin & Mercurio



A mattress scavenging van
© Ray Lopez

¹ There are no reliable statistics on the number of asymptomatic individuals. Estimates range from 25% to 70%.

A pressing quality of life problem

An indication of the depth of our bed bug problems is that bed bugs have been appearing in public schools, hospitals, offices, theaters, public and private spaces throughout our city, threatening a deterioration in our city's quality of life and reputation.

The expenditures necessary to control infestations burden families and business- and property-owners alike. The costs of eradication may include fees for pest control services that are often not guaranteed and need to be repeated multiple times, replacement of discarded furniture and belongings, long-term storage of untreatable belongings, plastic bags and containers for isolation of clothes and other items, dry cleaning and laundry, and DIY supplementary products. There are also productivity and wage losses due to days missed from work to attend to pre-treatment preparation tasks and to be present for inspections and treatment visits.

They don't spread disease—only misery

Bed bugs cause allergic reactions (sometimes significant reactions, including anaphylaxis), secondary skin infections, sleep deprivation, stress, anxiety, depression, and desperate and unsafe applications of pesticides in efforts to self-treat an infestation. Bronchial asthma and infant anemia have been suggested by studies but more research is needed to establish the risks.

The elderly, disabled and sick face significant challenges in eradicating infestations with conventional preparation and control measures that are invasive and labor-intensive.

Many New Yorkers report feeling socially isolated during an infestation.



© mangy_cur

Bed bug stories

Martin

Location: East Williamsburg

“I first got bed bugs about a year and a half ago. Out of the blue I started waking up itching like crazy and bitten up. After some research and actually finding a bug, I was able to identify the problem. Before I could even call an exterminator, I had to go through everything I owned and seal it in plastic. In order to ensure I didn't accidentally spread these bugs to friends, family and work, I had to try to sanitize everything I owned and seal it in clean plastic. Every morning involved special cleaning of surfaces and bagging and unbagging items, like I was going into a special sanitary chamber for the immune compromised. Every evening was spent vacuuming, organizing, bagging, inspecting and trying to sanitize my belongings. I am still scared to lend a book to a friend or have a friend over to my house. Sometimes I can't go to a friend's house because I can't be sure I have unexposed clothing to wear. I have ruined countless articles of expensive work-related clothing items and have had to practically replace half my work wardrobe. I no longer have a couch. I have had 4 pesticide treatments.

They finally appear to be gone, but I know my neighbors still have them, so everything I own is still in plastic. I just live in a sea of plastic bags, indefinitely.”

Enid

Location: Manhattan

“My husband and I are in the midst of a living hell. Our lives are upside down and topsy turvy. We have been hit with the bed bug infestation that is currently an epidemic in NYC. Unless you've been through this you can NOT imagine what this means. I'm on the verge of a nervous breakdown and of course financial ruin. It could not have hit me at a worse time as my work has completely dried up. But that's the least of my concerns right now. For now, we have had to rent a storage room to put a lot of our possessions in (the ones that we could save—we've thrown out thousand of dollars worth of items, clothes, 2 year old expensive mattress and box spring, antique bed frame, linens, pillows and I'm going through everything to get rid of as much clutter as possible and eliminate what I don't absolutely need). We have to do all of this as quickly as possible so they can get in and treat the apartment which is going to be a three week process. We are sleeping on air mattresses. I may never feel secure with another mattress again!

My landlord is going to do the least amount possible. I have major cracks in my walls and floors and he insists that they don't live there and did not come in that way. He is not willing to inspect and treat the other apartments in the building and there are only 7 total. I believe they will just travel back and forth until the whole building is treated.”

Margaritte’s bed bug bill

Location: Astoria — Duration of Infestation: 4 months

Item	Amount
Landlord: 4 pest control treatments	600
PURCHASES	
3 gal floor paint	165
caulking & foam	40
metal shelves & plastic bins	430
new metal table, side, mirror	170
bed bug cover for mattress	120
washable throw rugs	25
plastic bags / lg zip locks	35
2 men to help me caulk/paint	250
laundry, 4.50 a load, 50	225
new boots	100
metal legged desk	50
new metal bed frame	140
	1,750
LOST ITEMS	
couch	220
rug	200
coffee table	120
bookshelf	120
4 tall cabinets	200
3 chairs	150
armoire	350
approx. 200 books @ av. \$15	3,000
clothes shoes coats	800
blankets comforter	400
	5,560
MY TOTAL	\$7,310
TOTAL WITH LANDLORD’S EXPENSE	\$7,910

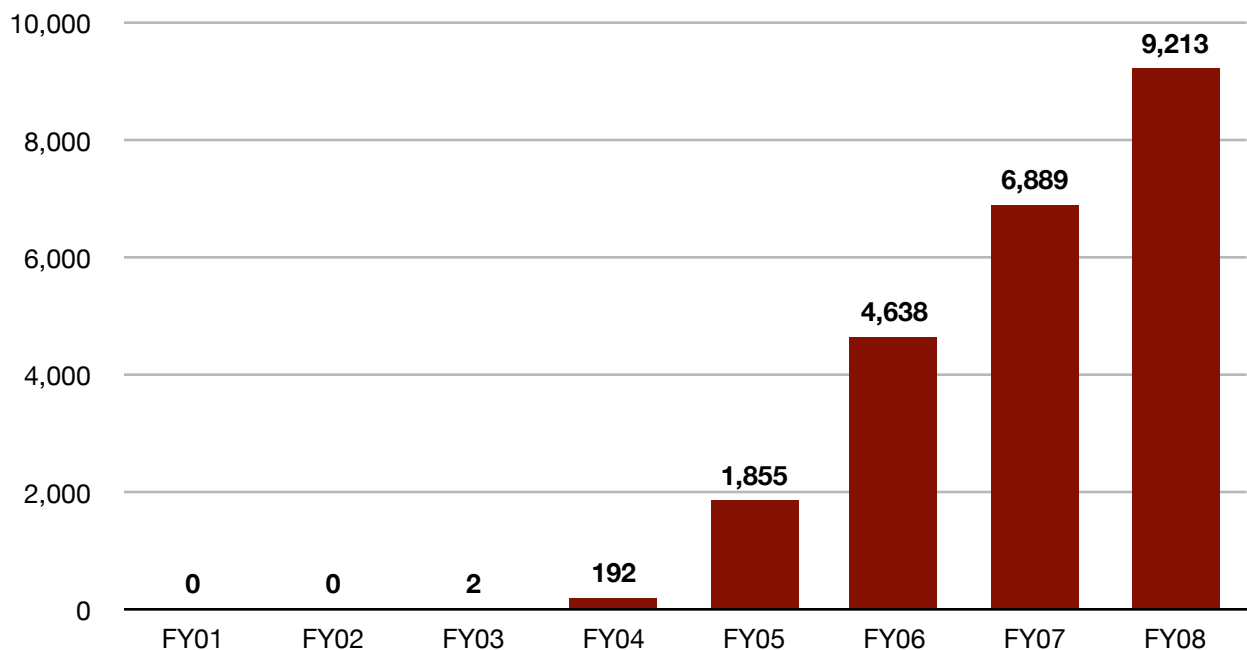
Statistics

The scope of the problem and the available statistics

- 311 processes bed bug complaints by residents of private residential housing seeking a specific remedy: help from the Department of Housing Preservation and Development (HPD) to compel their landlords to help them eradicate an infestation. 311 bed bug complaints are the first step in a landlord/tenant adversarial process and are thus only a subset of the total number of bed bug infestations.
- 311 complaints about bed bugs are currently not made available to the public as part of Local Law 47 reports.
- The New York City Housing Authority (NYCHA) and the Department of Education (DOE) track separate bed bug statistics.
- The available statistics from HPD are best viewed as indicators of as yet unknown infestation rates.

The available HPD and NYCHA statistics are analyzed below.

HPD Bed Bug Complaints – 2001-2008

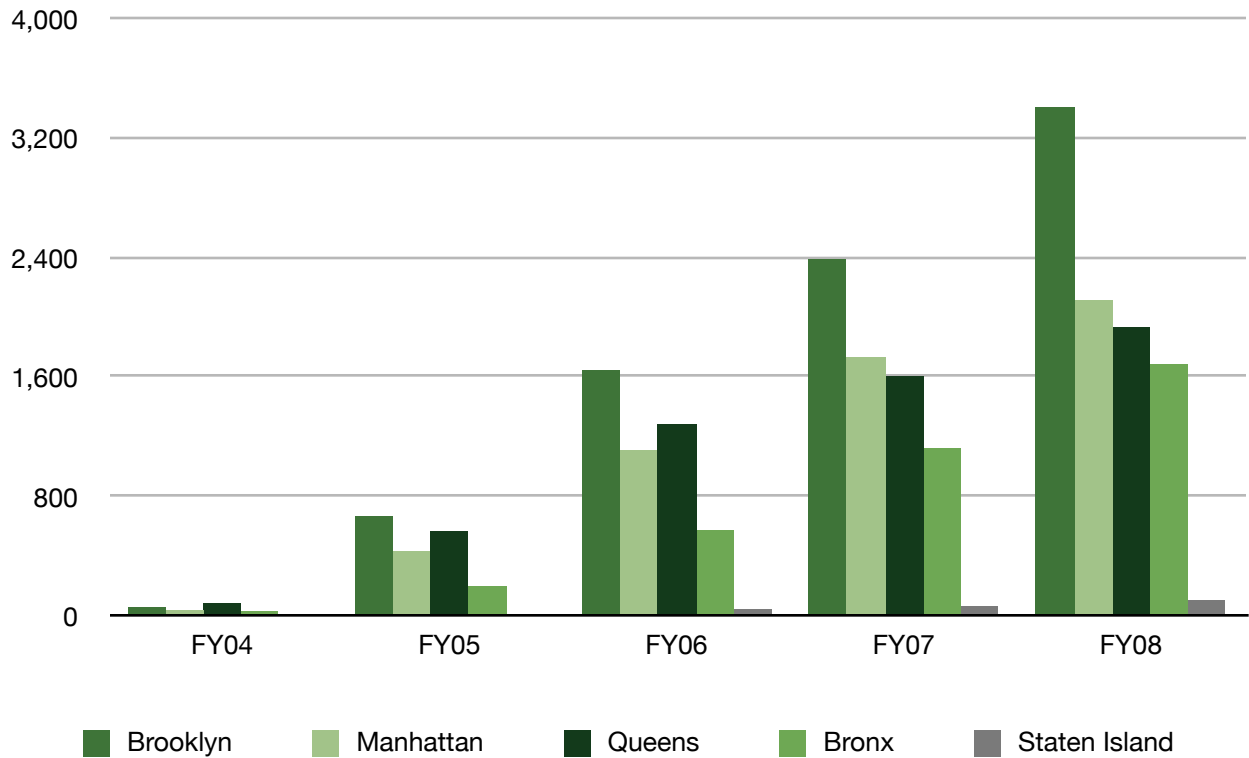


New York vs Bed Bugs

Data source: NYC Department of Housing Preservation and Development

Complaints increased 866% from 2004 to 2005, 150% from 2005 to 2006, 48.53% from 2006 to 2007, and 33.73% from 2007 to 2008.

HPD Bed Bug Complaints in the 5 Boroughs – 2004-2008



	FY 2004	FY 2005	FY 2006	FY 2007	FY 2008
Brooklyn	52	665	1,642	2,382	3,401
Manhattan	35	427	1,107	1,729	2,107
Queens	80	562	1,278	1,602	1,927
Bronx	25	193	570	1,117	1,682
Staten Island	0	8	41	59	96
Total	192	1,855	4,638	6,889	9,213

New York vs Bed Bugs

Data source: NYC Department of Housing Preservation and Development

From 2007 to 2008, complaints in Brooklyn increased 42.78%; 21.86% in Manhattan; 20.29% in Queens; 50.58% in the Bronx; and 62.71% in Staten Island.

HPD Bed Bug Complaints and Violations – 2004 to 2008

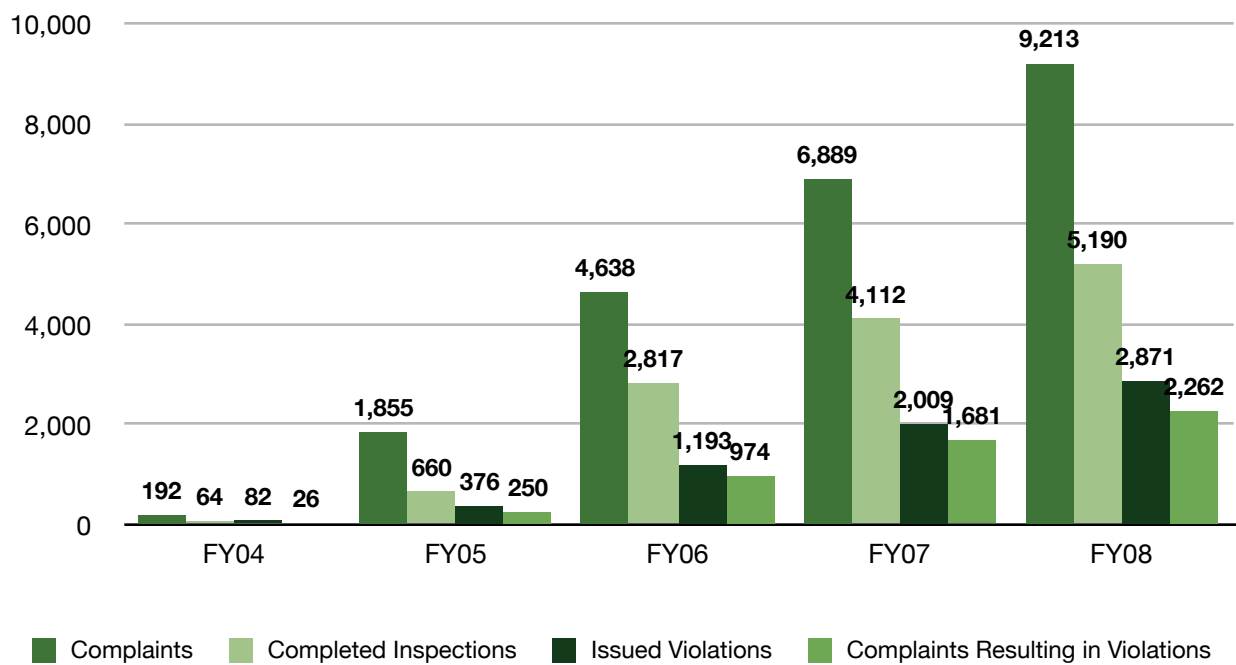
	Fiscal Year 2004		Fiscal Year 2008		% Increase	
	Complaints	Violations	Complaints	Violations	Complaints	Violations
Brooklyn	52	13	3,401	1,073	6,440%	8,154%
Manhattan	35	17	2,107	626	5,920%	3,582%
Queens	80	47	1,927	588	2,309%	1,151%
Bronx	25	5	1,682	546	6,628%	10,820%
Staten Island	0	0	96	38	NA	NA
Total	192	82	9,213	2,871	4,698%	3,401%

New York vs Bed Bugs

Data source: NYC Department of Housing Preservation and Development

There are considerable gaps between the number of complaints, the number of completed inspections and the number of issued violations.

HPD Bed Bug Complaints, Completed Inspections, Issued Violations and Complaints Resulting in Violations – 2004-2008



New York vs Bed Bugs

Data source: NYC Department of Housing Preservation and Development

You can view a map of the city's community districts and download your community district profile at the website of the Department of City Planning: <http://www.nyc.gov/html/dcp/html/lucds/cdstart.shtml>.

Ranked Community Districts Based on HPD Bed Bug Complaints – 2008

Rank	Borough	Community District	Neighborhoods	FY07	FY08	% Increase/Decrease
1	Brooklyn	4	Bushwick	476	561	17.9%
2	Manhattan	12	Washington Heights, Inwood	366	499	36.3%
3	Brooklyn	14	Flatbush, Ocean Parkway, Midwood	210	387	84.3%
4	Manhattan	10	Central Harlem	269	346	28.6%
5	Manhattan	9	West Harlem, Morningside Heights, Manhattanville, Hamilton Heights	216	342	58.3%
6	Bronx	4	Highbridge / Concourse	200	312	56.0%
7	Queens	1	Astoria & Long Island City	345	283	-18.0%
8	Bronx	7	Kingsbridge Heights., Bedford Park, Fordham, University Heights	220	259	17.7%
9	Brooklyn	7	Sunset Park, Windsor Terrace	157	248	58.0%
10	Bronx	5	Morris Heights, University Heights, Fordham, Mt. Hope	163	244	49.7%
11	Queens	2	Sunnyside & Woodside	240	243	1.3%
12	Brooklyn	1	Greenpoint, Williamsburg	148	240	62.2%
13	Brooklyn	3	Bedford Stuyvesant, Tompkins Park North, Stuyvesant Heights	124	234	88.7%
14	Queens	3	Jackson Heights, East Elmhurst, North Corona	198	228	15.2%
15	Brooklyn	11	Bensonhurst, Mapleton, Bath Beach, Gravesend	242	221	-8.7%
16	Manhattan	11	East Harlem	247	218	-11.7%
17	Queens	7	Flushing, Whitestone, College Point	150	214	42.7%
18	Manhattan	7	Lincoln Square, Upper West Side	160	203	26.9%
19	Queens	5	Maspeth, Middle Village, Ridgewood, Glendale	134	203	51.5%

Rank	Borough	Community District	Neighborhoods	FY07	FY08	% Increase/Decrease
20	Brooklyn	12	Borough Park, Ocean Parkway, Kensington	138	198	43.5%
21	Queens	4	Elmhurst & Corona	128	186	45.3%
22	Brooklyn	8	Crown Heights, Prospect Heights, Weeksville	85	185	117.6%
23	Brooklyn	5	East New York, New Lots, City Line, Starrett City	110	183	66.4%
24	Brooklyn	9	Crown Heights South, Prospect Lefferts Gardens, Wingate	79	157	98.7%
25	Manhattan	4	Chelsea, Clinton	162	156	-3.7%
26	Bronx	1	Mott Haven, Melrose, Port Morris	112	150	33.9%
27	Brooklyn	13	Coney Island, Brighton Beach, Gravesend, Homecrest, Seagate	120	146	21.7%
28	Brooklyn	10	Bay Ridge, Dyker Heights, Fort Hamilton	195	143	-26.7%
29	Queens	12	Jamaica, South Jamaica, Hollis, St. Albans	158	142	-10.1%
30	Bronx	9	Soundview, Castle Hill, Union Port, Parkchester	83	138	66.3%
31	Brooklyn	15	Sheepshead Bay, Manhattan Beach, Kings Highway, Gravesend	91	136	49.5%
32	Queens	9	Woodhaven, Richmond Hill, Kew Gardens	80	124	55.0%
33	Bronx	6	East Tremont, Bathgate, Belmont, West Farms	80	123	53.8%
34	Brooklyn	17	Flatbush, Rugby, Farragut, Northeast Flatbush	43	120	179.1%
35	Queens	14	The Rockaways, Broad Channel	53	114	115.1%
36	Bronx	3	Melrose, Morrisania, Claremont, Crotona Park East	56	92	64.3%
37	Bronx	2	Hunts Point, Longwood	54	91	68.5%
38	Bronx	12	Williamsbridge, Baychester, Woodlawn, Wakefield, Eastchester	37	91	145.9%
39	Manhattan	3	Lower East Side, Chinatown, Two Bridges	114	90	-21.1%

Rank	Borough	Community District	Neighborhoods	FY07	FY08	% Increase/Decrease
40	Queens	8	Fresh Meadows, Kew Gardens Hills, Jamaica Hills	49	83	69.4%
41	Bronx	11	Morris Park, Pelham Parkway, Bronxdale, Van Nest, Laconia	67	82	22.4%
42	Staten Island	1	North Island	36	74	105.6%
43	Brooklyn	16	Ocean Hill, Brownsville	58	70	20.7%
44	Manhattan	8	Upper East Side, Lenox Hill, Yorkville, Roosevelt Island	70	68	-2.9%
45	Manhattan	5	Midtown, Times Square, Herald Square, Midtown South	32	65	103.1%
46	Brooklyn	2	Downtown Brooklyn, Fort Greene, Brooklyn Heights, Boerum Hill	53	65	22.6%
47	Manhattan	2	Greenwich Village, Noho, Soho, Little Italy	43	58	34.9%
48	Manhattan	6	Murray Hill, East Midtown, Stuyvesant Town	44	55	25.0%
49	Bronx	8	Kingsbridge, Riverdale, Marble Hill, Fieldston	39	50	28.2%
50	Brooklyn	6	Red Hook, Park Slope, Gowanus, Carroll Gardens, Cobble Hill	25	49	96.0%
51	Bronx	10	Throgs Neck, Pelham Bay, Co-op City, Westchester Square, City Island	6	46	666.7%
52	Brooklyn	18	Canarsie, Flatlands, Marine Park, Mill Basin, Bergen Beach	26	44	69.2%
53	Queens	6	Rego Park & Forest Hills	25	43	72.0%
54	Queens	13	Laurelton, Cambria Heights, Queens Village, Glen Oaks	18	26	44.4%
55	Queens	10	Howard Beach, Ozone Park, South Ozone Park	20	19	-5.0%
56	Staten Island	2	Mid-Island	10	18	80.0%
57	Brooklyn	0	undefined Brooklyn	2	14	600.0%
58	Queens	0	undefined Queens	1	13	1,200.0%

Rank	Borough	Community District	Neighborhoods	FY07	FY08	% Increase/Decrease
59	Queens	11	Bayside, Douglaston, Little Neck, Auburndale	3	6	100.0%
60	Manhattan	1	Civic Center, Wall Street, Governors Island, Liberty Island, Ellis Island, Tribeca	6	5	-16.7%
61	Bronx	0	undefined Bronx	0	4	NA
62	Manhattan	0	undefined Manhattan	0	2	NA
63	Staten Island	0	undefined Staten Island	0	2	NA
64	Staten Island	3	South Island	13	2	-84.6%

New York vs Bed Bugs

Data source: NYC Department of Housing Preservation and Development

Complaints in the ten community districts below showed the highest increases from 2007 to 2008.

Top 10 Community Districts Ranked by Rate of Increase in HPD Complaints – 2008

Rank	Borough	Community District	Neighborhoods	FY07	FY08	% Increase/Decrease
1	Bronx	10	Throgs Neck, Pelham Bay, Co-op City, Westchester Square, City Island	6	46	666.7%
2	Brooklyn	17	Flatbush, Rugby, Farragut, Northeast Flatbush	43	120	179.1%
3	Bronx	12	Williamsbridge, Baychester, Woodlawn, Wakefield, Eastchester	37	91	145.9%
4	Brooklyn	8	Crown Heights, Prospect Heights, Weeksville	85	185	117.6%
5	Queens	14	The Rockaways, Broad Channel	53	114	115.1%
6	Staten Island	1	North Island	36	74	105.6%
7	Manhattan	5	Midtown, Times Square, Herald Square, Midtown South	32	65	103.1%
8	Queens	11	Bayside, Douglaston, Little Neck, Auburndale	3	6	100.0%

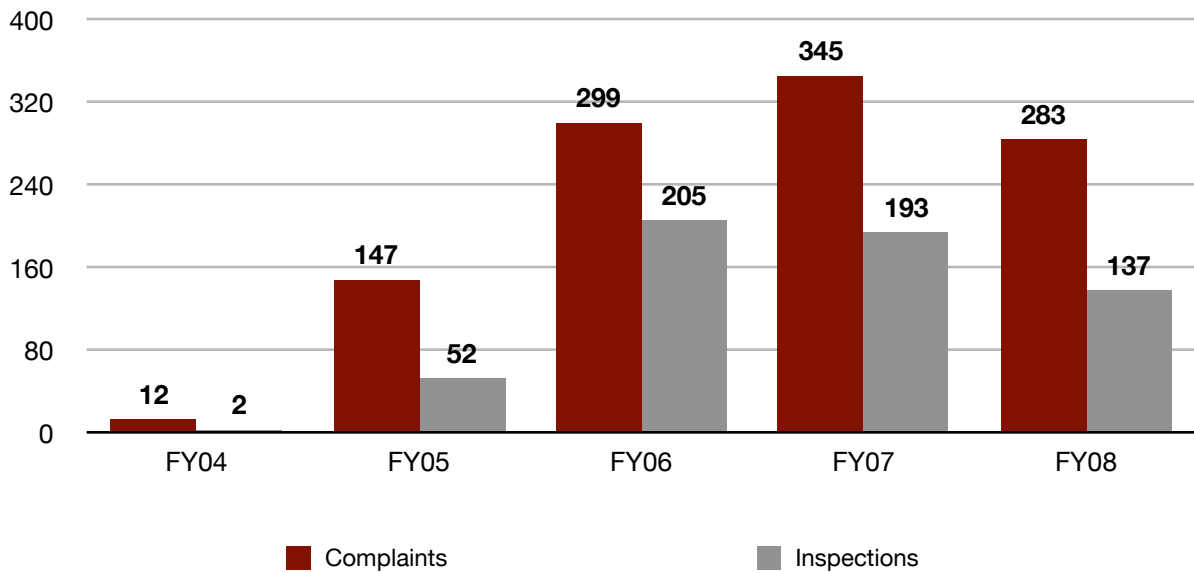
Rank	Borough	Community District	Neighborhoods	FY07	FY08	% Increase/Decrease
9	Brooklyn	9	Crown Heights South, Prospect Lefferts Gardens, Wingate	79	157	98.7%
10	Brooklyn	6	Red Hook, Park Slope, Gowanus, Carroll Gardens, Cobble Hill	25	49	96.0%

New York vs Bed Bugs

Data source: NYC Department of Housing Preservation and Development

Following is a sampling of bed bug complaints in selected community districts over 5 years, with numbers of completed HPD inspections.

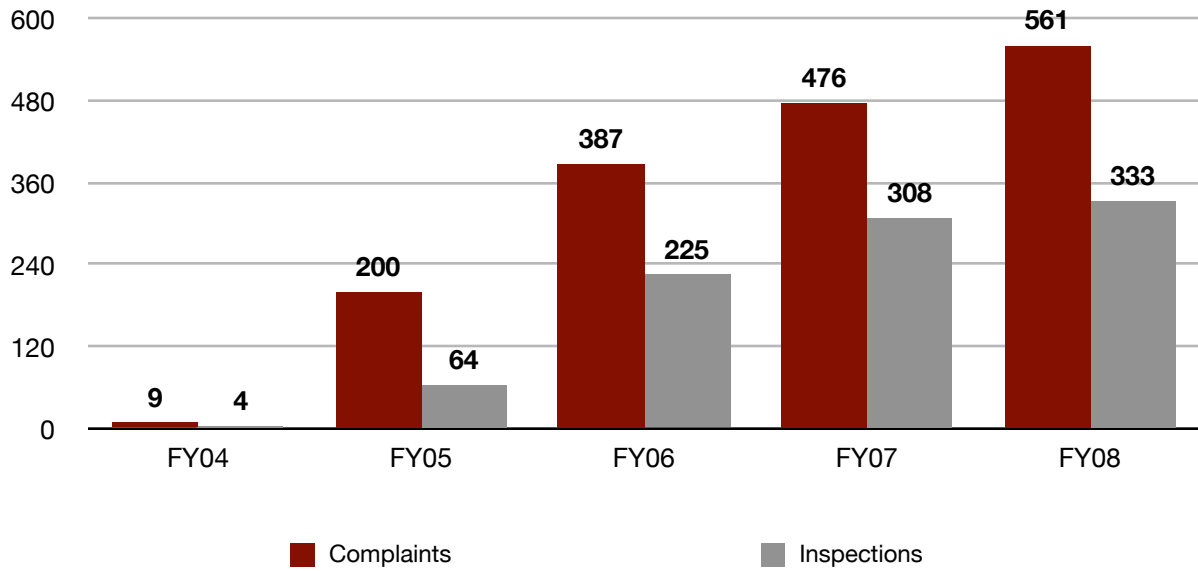
HPD bed bug complaints vs inspections in Queens CD1 (Astoria, Long Island City) — 2004-2008



New York vs Bed Bugs

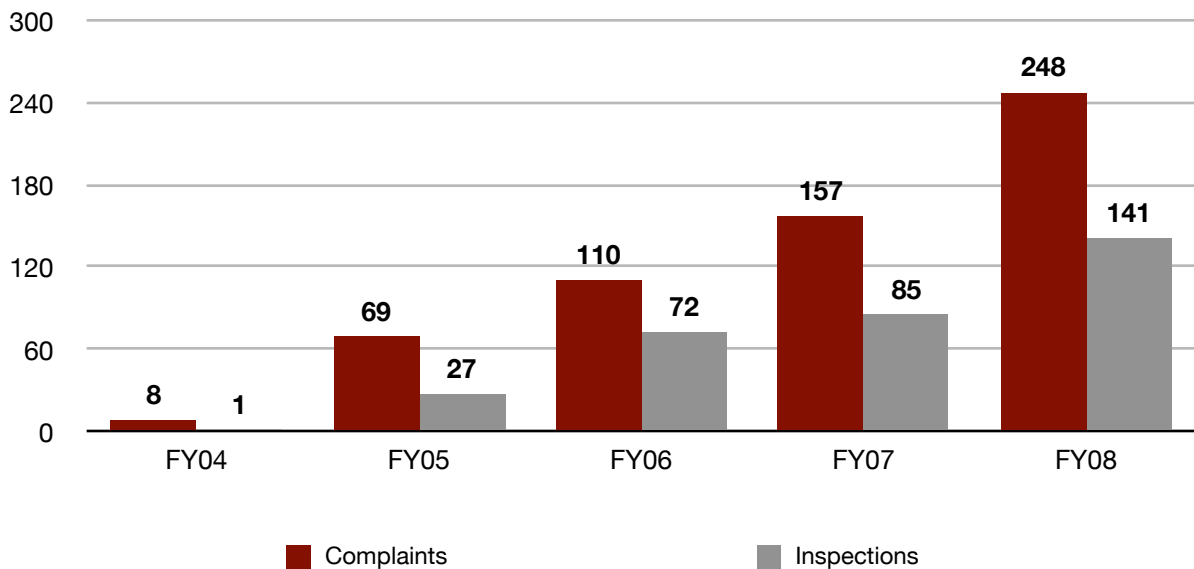
Data source: NYC Department of Housing Preservation and Development

HPD bed bug complaints vs inspections in Brooklyn CD4 (Bushwick) — 2004-2008



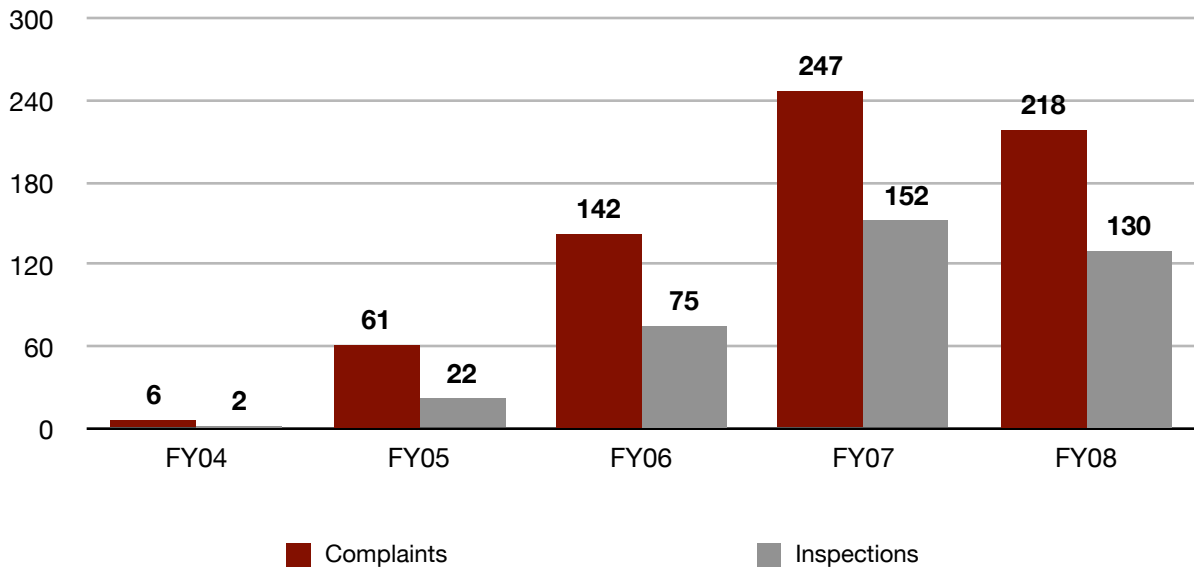
Data source: NYC Department of Housing Preservation and Development

HPD bed bug complaints vs inspections in Brooklyn CD7 (Sunset Park, Windsor Terrace) — 2004-2008



Data source: NYC Department of Housing Preservation and Development

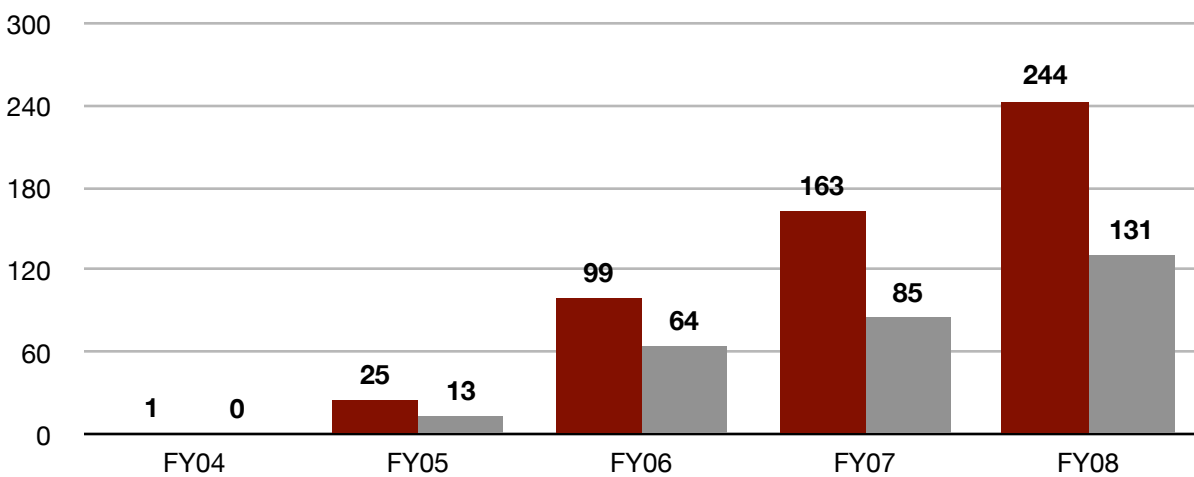
HPD bed bug complaints vs inspections in Manhattan CD11 (East Harlem) – 2004-2008



New York vs Bed Bugs

Data source: NYC Department of Housing Preservation and Development

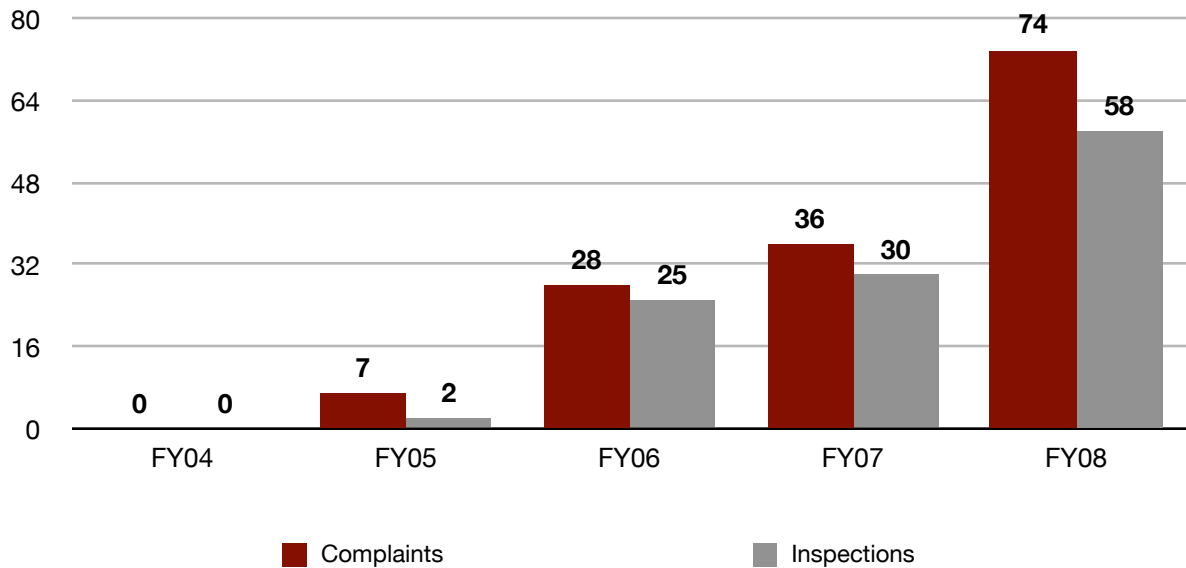
HPD bed bug complaints vs inspections in Bronx CD5 (Morris Heights, University Heights, Fordham, Mt. Hope) – 2004-2008



New York vs Bed Bugs

Data source: NYC Department of Housing Preservation and Development

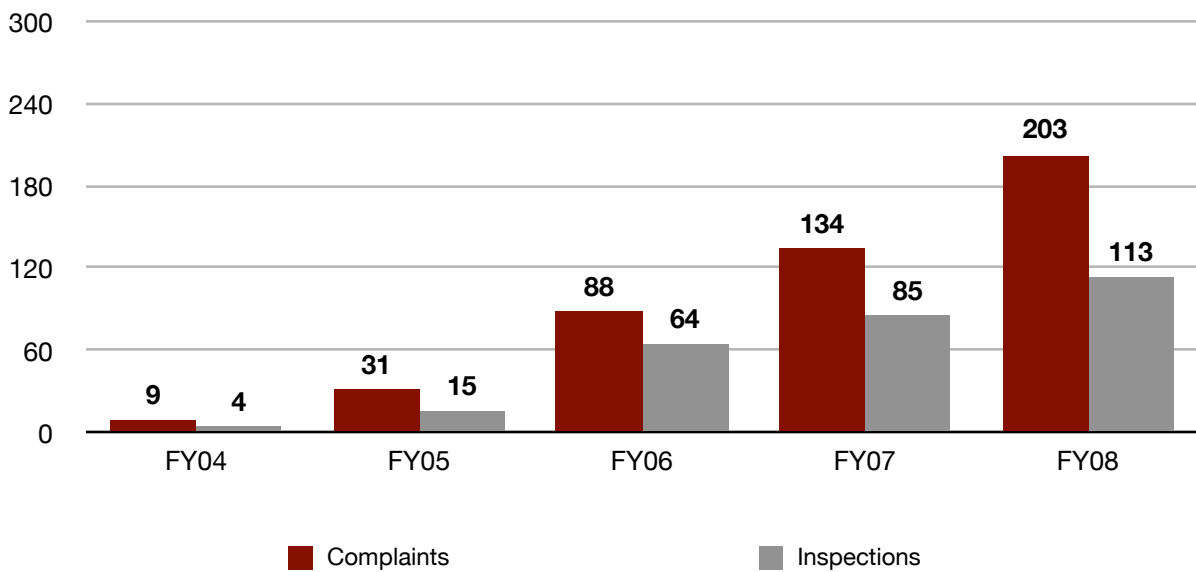
HPD bed bug complaints vs inspections in Staten Island CD1 (North Island) – 2004-2008



New York vs Bed Bugs

Data source: NYC Department of Housing Preservation and Development

HPD bed bug complaints vs inspections in Queens CD5 (Maspeth, Middle Village, Ridgewood, Glendale) – 2004-2008



New York vs Bed Bugs

Data source: NYC Department of Housing Preservation and Development

New York City Housing Authority

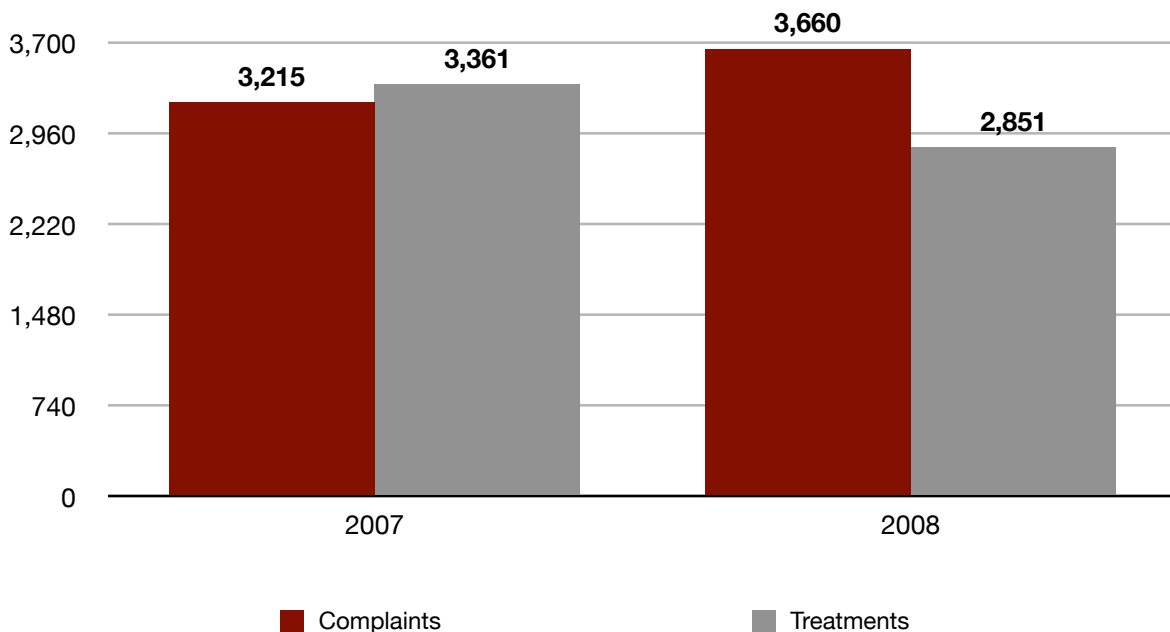
According to the website of the New York City Housing Authority (NYCHA), 5% of New York City's population lives in NYCHA properties:

“NYCHA is the largest public housing authority in North America. NYCHA's Conventional Public Housing Program has 177,976 (as of December 2, 2008) apartments in 340 developments throughout the City in 2,618 residential buildings containing 3,335 elevators (as of November 30, 2008). NYCHA has 12,260 employees serving 173,731 families and 402,370 authorized residents (as of October 27, 2008). A total of 633,637 people, about 1 in 13 New Yorkers, are served by NYCHA's Public Housing and Section 8 Programs. If NYCHA were a city, it would rank 19th in population size in the United States, with New York City ranked first.”²

NYCHA provides pest control services directly to its tenants, who can call a centralized maintenance line to report a bed bug problem, (718) 707-7771. Calls to 311 from NYCHA residents are routed to the maintenance line. Residents who report bed bugs receive, or are supposed to receive, three bed bug treatment visits, spaced two weeks apart, according to information we have obtained directly from the maintenance line operators.

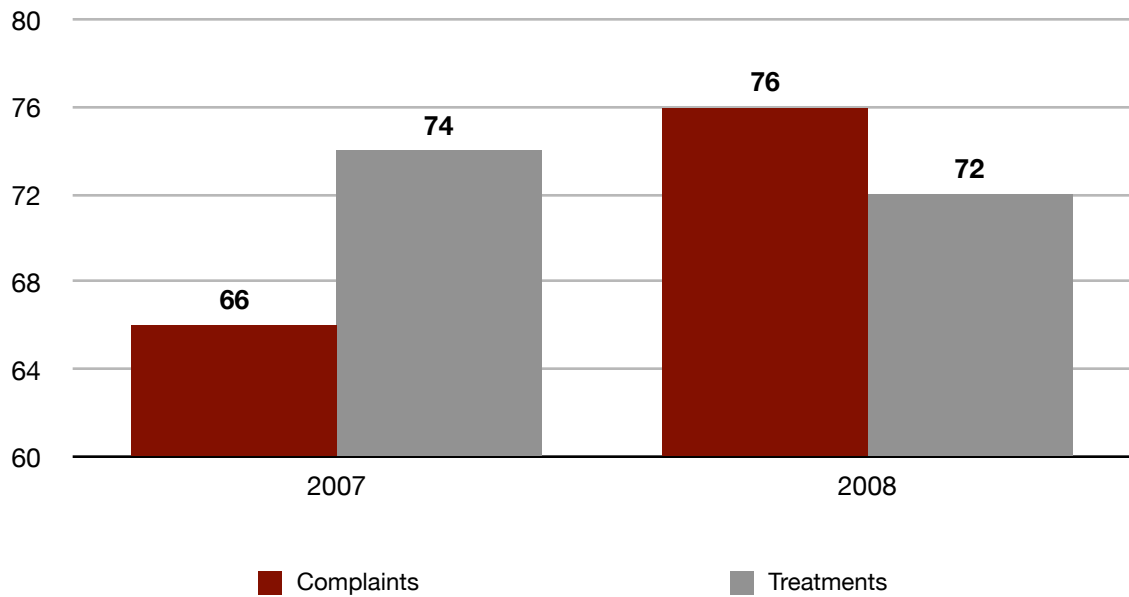
We asked NYCHA for total number of complaints and for the total number of treatments for each complaint. We received information outlining total complaints and treatments. While complaints have increased, treatments have not.

NYCHA Bed Bug Complaints and Treatments — 2007-2008



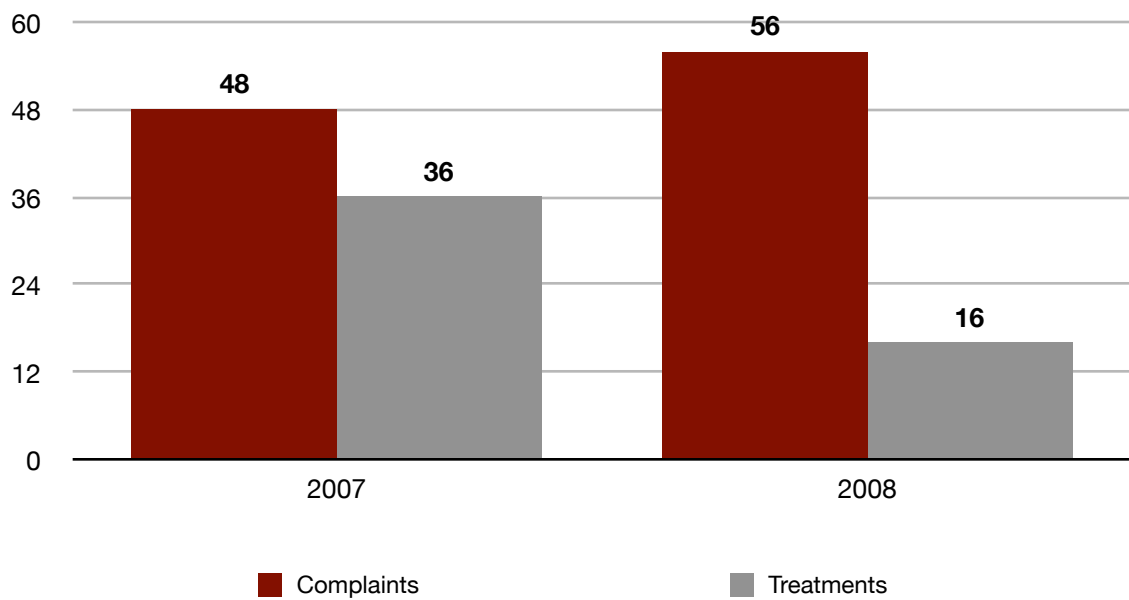
² New York City Housing Authority: <http://www.nyc.gov/html/nycha/html/about/factsheet.shtml>

NYCHA Bed Bug Complaints and Treatments in One Housing Development in Queens — 2007-2008



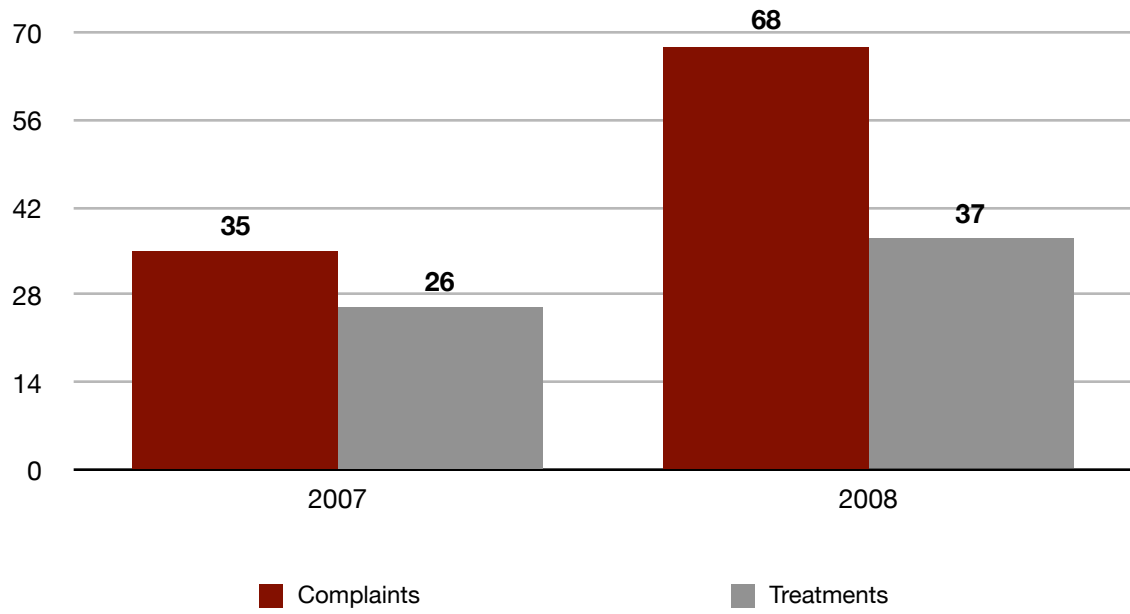
Data source: New York City Housing Authority

NYCHA Bed Bug Complaints and Treatments in One Housing Development in Manhattan (A) — 2007-2008



Data source: New York City Housing Authority

NYCHA Bed Bug Complaints and Treatments in One Housing Development in Manhattan (B) – 2007-2008



New York vs Bed Bugs

Data source: New York City Housing Authority

Statistics in other jurisdictions

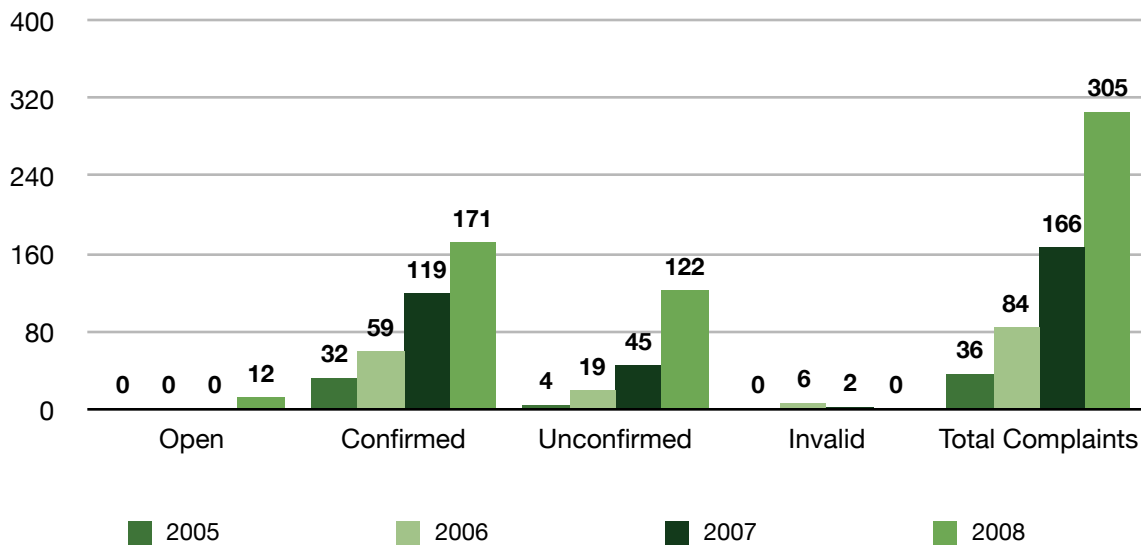
Toronto

The February 14, 2008 Report of the Toronto Medical Officer of Health³ included results of a pest control survey:

“TPH surveyed twelve pest control companies in December 2007, and received six responses. All six companies reported an increase in numbers of inquiries and calls related to bed bugs from 2006 to 2007. [...] One company estimated 1200 treatments for bed bugs in 2007, and another company provided 400 to 450 treatments every month for bed bug infestations.”

From March to November 2008, Toronto Public Health received 1,444 requests for bed bug services.⁴

Bed Bug Complaints in Hamilton County, Ohio – 2005-2008



Source: Hamilton County Public Health

In 2008, Cincinnati commissioned a survey which showed that 14.5% of Cincinnati respondents, and 3.6% of Hamilton County respondents outside of Cincinnati, reported a bed bug problem in 2007.

The population of Hamilton County is 842,369. The population of Cincinnati is 332,458.

³ Medical Officer of Health's Report, February 14, 2008:
<http://www.toronto.ca/legdocs/mmis/2008/hl/bgrd/backgroundfile-11155.pdf>

⁴ Medical Officer of Health's Report, November 12, 2008:
<http://www.toronto.ca/legdocs/mmis/2008/hl/bgrd/backgroundfile-17412.pdf>

Stopping the spread

We believe that the tasks required to control the spread of bed bugs in our city can be derived from the following priorities.

Tracking infestations data

- We need data collection and analysis to find the true scope of the problem.
- In Cincinnati, a recent survey showed that 14.5% of respondents reported a bed bug infestation in 2007, a year when the official complaint tally was less than 800 complaints. The under-reporting rate suggested by this survey (over 98%) would yield a worrisome number if applied to New York City's HPD statistics.
- New York vs Bed Bugs recommends community and pest control industry surveys and a city-wide reporting database to track bed bug infestations.

A public education campaign

- A bed bug hotline, public service announcements, and well-designed bed bug information materials should be delivered on the web and directly to communities without internet access.
- The information that is most critical is: rights and responsibilities of tenants and landlords, prevention, identification and the signs of infestation, best-practice bed bug management recommendations, and how to evaluate bed bug pest control providers.
- The goal of a coordinated public education effort: early detection of infestations and mitigation of the activities and bed bug management errors that contribute to the spread.

Clear bed bug control guidelines

- We believe that the single, most effective measure that would have an immediate impact in controlling the spread of bed bugs is the automatic, thorough inspection and monitoring by qualified pest management personnel of apartments and spaces adjoining an identified infestation. Inspection is the key to solving bed bug infestations, enabling the targeting of pest control resources to achieve eradication.
- Notification of building residents and the dissemination of good bed bug information and best-practice advice to all the residents in an affected building would reinforce awareness and prevention and facilitate early detection of infestations.
- Informed residents and property managers would be better able to evaluate the services rendered by pest control providers.

Specialized training of pest control providers, bed bug inspectors, and property management staff

- The importance of inspections, the methods and tools of inspection, preparation and treatment, and good bed bug management principles and techniques should be widely disseminated among professionals and property management staff, with the objective of decreasing the numbers of infestations that are mismanaged, that become entrenched and thus likely to spread in our communities.
- Additional public/private strategies should be investigated, such as social enterprise bed bug control, tenant preparation assistants, and other creative approaches that should be fomented and developed.

Sensible used mattress and furniture regulations

- New York State lacks used mattress sanitizing regulations.
- Bed bugs spread via the sale of improperly sanitized used bedding and used furniture and via the improper transportation of used bedding and furniture in trucks.
- New York vs Bed Bugs supports a ban on the sale of reconditioned mattresses. In the alternative, we recommend the consideration of mattress sanitizing regulations modeled on the regulations of the Southern Nevada Health District⁵ which found that heat sterilization is the most reliable sanitization method.

Bed bug garbage disposal protocols

- Not only does the dragging of infested belongings throughout common areas en route to trash disposal spread bed bugs, but bed bug trash that sits in basements awaiting collection can provide a reservoir of bed bugs that may re-infest the building or expose building staff.
- Sanitation workers must also be protected from exposure to bed bugs in improperly sealed bed bug trash. And all efforts to deter residents and passers-by from collecting infested items from the trash would greatly benefit overall control efforts and reduce the spread of infestations.
- New York vs Bed Bugs recommends the distribution of educational materials, similar to trash recycling materials, instructing New Yorkers on the ins and outs of bed bug trash. Examples of instructions would include how to seal and mark bed bug infested belongings for trash collection before removal from the apartment, and explanations on what belongings can actually be treated and saved.

⁵ Southern Nevada Health District Regulations Governing the Sanitation and Safety of Used Mattresses, Bedding, and Upholstered Furniture: http://www.southernnevadahealthdistrict.org/download/environmental_health/mattress-regs.pdf

Policy responses: three cities

Cincinnati

Cincinnati established a Bed Bug Remediation Commission in September 2007. The City of Cincinnati and Hamilton County formed a Joint Bed Bug Task Force and drafted an ambitious Strategic Plan⁶ that outlined the following initiatives and objectives: a hotline to report bed bug infestations and a joint city/county database to track infestations; bed bug surveys; a public education campaign; best practices for the inspection of infested premises and adjacent dwellings; training of pest control professionals; used furniture regulations; enforcement tools; and bed bug trash and furniture pick-up protocols and hotline.

Toronto

In February 2008, the Medical Officer of Health issued a report, at the request of the City Council, recommending the creation of a Bed Bug Action Committee, later renamed the Toronto Bed Bug Project. An interim report of the Medical Officer of Health in November 2008⁷ outlined the following initiatives and objectives: expansion of educational efforts; a bed bug survey and a secure reporting website for the pest control industry; development of best practices for businesses; five pilot projects in residential buildings with specific challenges; partnering with the pest control industry to lobby for more effective pesticides; and securing funding for a city-wide control strategy and for a social enterprise bed bug preparation program, Bug and Scrub.

Toronto Public Health has produced a bed bug website⁸ (accessible from the front page) that is the most comprehensive of its kind to date. Information provided includes a telephone hotline, half a dozen places to bring a bed bug sample for identification, and a fact sheet translated in thirteen languages. There are also fact sheets for pest control professionals, landlords and health care providers.

Boston

The Inspectional Services Department has the following policy for bed bug violations:

“Our Standard bed bug notice of violation also requires that owners inspect all units in the dwelling, and they must treat all horizontally and vertically adjacent units to the infested unit(s).”⁹

⁶ The Cincinnati / Hamilton County Joint Bed Bug Task Force Strategic Plan:
<http://newyorkvsbedbugs.org/the-cincinnati-hamilton-county-joint-bed-bug-task-force-strategic-plan/>

⁷ The Toronto Bed Bug Project Medical Officer of Health's Staff Report, November 13, 2008:
<http://www.toronto.ca/legdocs/mmis/2008/hl/bgrd/backgroundfile-17412.pdf>

⁸ Toronto Public Health's bed bug website: <http://www.toronto.ca/health/bedbugs/index.htm>

⁹ City of Boston Inspectional Services Department: <http://www.cityofboston.gov/isd/housing/bb.asp>

Bed bugs are a public health pest

They are on the Environmental Protection Agency's *List of Pests of Significant Public Health Importance*:¹⁰

“Section 28(d) of the Federal Insecticide Fungicide and Rodenticide Act (FIFRA) requires the United States Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), in coordination with the United States Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) and United States Department of Agriculture (USDA), to identify pests of significant public health importance and, in coordination with the Public Health Service, to develop and implement programs to improve and facilitate the safe and necessary use of chemical, biological and other methods to combat and control such pests of public health importance. Issuance of this list fulfills the requirement of FIFRA sec. 28(d) to identify pests of significant public health importance as a part of this process.”

¹⁰ Pesticide Registration (PR Notice) Notice 2002-1: List of Pests of Significant Public Health Importance, http://www.epa.gov/PR_Notices/pr2002-1.pdf

New York City Council legislation

New York vs Bed Bugs supports legislative proposals introduced in the New York City Council by Council Member Gale Brewer that would create a bed bug task force (Int. 57-2006), establish a Department of Health and Mental Hygiene education program for pest control providers and property owners plus a hotline for the public (Int. 873-2008), and provide bed bug trash stickers and bags from the Department of Sanitation (Int. 872-2008).

A public hearing is scheduled for February 24 at 1 p.m. at City Hall

We urge New Yorkers to attend, to tell their bed bug stories and ask for a comprehensive plan to stop the spread of bed bugs in New York City.

Those who are unable to attend can submit written testimony before the hearing to the New York City Council's Health Committee Counsel, Adira Siman, via email at ASiman@council.nyc.gov



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