

# CONTENTS SOLUTIONS

THE GO-TO-GUIDE FOR PERSONAL PROPERTY RESTORATION

Vol. 10, Issue 10

## CONTENTS PROS VS. BED BUGS! THE "VAMPIRES" NOBODY LIKES

THE WHITE GLOVE TEST  
HIDDEN SOOT RESIDUE

THE NEW BREED OF GREEN  
MODERN GREEN CLEANERS



Provided by your Contents Restoration partner



*Fire \* Smoke \* Water*

1180 Douglas Rd., Batavia, IL 60510

Ph. 630.761.8100

[www.mwrestore.com](http://www.mwrestore.com)

# Don't Let The Bed Bugs Bite

Well, they aren't happy about it, but it turns out that contents restoration professionals are numbered among the best defenses against bed bugs.

Bed bugs are wingless little fellows that feed on blood – nothing else. They like beds because humans fall asleep there and don't move much. They like theaters, hotels and ships because it is like a smorgasbord for them.

According to the website [www.bedbugs.org](http://www.bedbugs.org), "...ever since a lawsuit involving bed bugs was publicized over two years ago, insurance companies have seen a glut of bedbug-related claims, and lawyers are receiving calls almost daily from people reporting physical, emotional, and mental harm from bed bugs..

People who try "over-the-counter" bug sprays and foggers quickly discover that the bed bugs don't like them and move to every other room in the house. Professional grade bug killers work better but take a long time and can be very hard on humans.

So, what can the contents pros do that everybody else does not? As it turns out they can do some very odd things and some rather straight forward ones, that all work.

One thing they do is to bring in directed heat (like overgrown hair blowers) and bake the little vampires. Another is to go the other direction and use, believe it or not, CO2. They have found a way to freeze the invaders.

One classic method is to bring in infrared heaters and raise the room temperature to somewhere between 120 and 140 degrees (Fahrenheit).

They have also discovered bed bug sniffing dogs – no kidding! These dogs can actually find their "prey." And will point them out, for a price.

But the real worth of the contents pros comes when they clean a room just as they would after a fire or other contamination. They remove everything, clean ev-

erything, wash that which can be saved (and they dry it for an extra long time when dealing with insect infestation). They scrub the walls, vacuum the floors, bedding, etc. then clean the surfaces of every stick of furniture and they work their way up to light fixtures and down to the baseboards – just as if they were dealing with smoke and soot.

All trash will be removed, all piles of clothing, shoes, books, keepsakes etc., examined and treated according to its structure and composition.

Next, they remove wall sockets and put diatomaceous earth (food grade) or boric acid in the empty spaces. The bedbugs one can see are eliminated; the ones that are hiding are exposed to the contact poison that they will carry with them to their mates.

If there are pets or children in the house, they won't put borax powder or diatomaceous earth around the legs of the bed, but they will move the bed away from the wall and put talcum powder around the legs.

They will clean the drapes; the window ledges and steam clean the carpets and bed itself.

When they are finished there will be no bugs left, very few places for them to hide and traps positioned in places where they cannot harm humans but will eventually kill any survivors.

Of late some companies and individuals have been seeking the services of the deep-cleaning contents professionals in tandem with bug exterminators to make doubly sure and the restoration pros are glad to have them by their side.

Contents pros have the training and experience to get it done once, get it done right.



## This, "Ain't your grandma's green"

"Oh no, not green again! That stuff never works." That is what some contents professionals are hearing from property managers, insurance adjusters and agents. And no wonder, when the first so called, "green" products came out everyone was very excited about the fact that they were easier on the environment, didn't cost much more and didn't put the workers who used them at risk.

Then, we discovered that many of them didn't work, the ones that did weren't actually environmentally friendly, and since the ones that didn't work forced the teams to clean all over again, they weren't even remotely cost effective.

But that was (believe it or not!) 20 years ago. The "green" cleaners of today are a whole new breed. They aren't just tested by high tech agencies for their efficacy and legitimacy, they are usually introduced to contents pros as samples so they can match them against their best, meanest, most powerful technologies, substances and methods

– thus far, the new green is plenty "mean!" Some of them have even outperformed their toxic cousins.

And there are several advantages. Most of them can be used while workers are still in their offices (unlike ozone, the old microbials, bleaches, etc.).

They are harmless to humans, but can kill mold, bacteria, erase odors (not cover them up) and they save money, reduce labor, use less energy and water – and best of all there are almost no residual contaminants to clean up and no waste of materials.

Green is here to stay. And finally, it is a welcome guest.





## The White Glove Test

Of course you have heard of the "White Glove Test." Popular in old movies and with 1950's mother-in-laws, you would actually see someone put on a white glove and run it along a bookcase or counter top to see how much dust had accumulated there – a sort of "final exam," to see whether an area was thoroughly clean.

The "Contents Pros White Glove Test" is similar, but happens first on a job where a contents professional is employed. Before any cleaning is done, all concerned parties have to decide what actually needs to be cleaned, and in the case of a fire, the insurance company and the insured want to know that the home is going to be, safe, livable and free from smoke residue.

On a typical "walk-through" of a home or office where a fire has occurred, the adjuster, owner and professional cleaners may look at a wall and agree that it appears to be free of smoke residue and soot – but then the contents pro pulls out a white micro-fiber cloth, runs it across the wall for a few inches and holds it under a small, pocket-sized microscope for all to see. Many adjusters are most grateful when they observe the soot and ash particles that are displayed there. A paper towel would not have shown it, but now we are looking at the black granules that had permeated the wall's

surface. Ash and soot do not look like ordinary dust under a microscope, and they are an instant health hazard for those who have to live and breathe in their proximity.

People with heart or lung disease, asthma, etc., will most often experience the health effects earlier and at much lower levels of soot and ash than healthy people. Children are more susceptible to smoke pollution as well, because they actually breathe more air (and polluted air), pound for pound, than adults.

Wood smoke particulates, (which can be less than 5 microns) can work their way past the upper respiratory tract and deep into the lungs (a human hair is 70 microns across). They are sharp-edged and burrow into tissue where they can cause inflammation and worse.

If you are wondering why no one thought of this simple, pocket-microscope technology before, it is most likely because contents cleaning professionals are a historically new phenomenon – and a lot of insurance adjusters and agents think they came along just in time.

Trained contents pros are the first line of defense against a job half done and a pocket microscope with a white micro-fiber cloth are just two of their "can do" secrets for keeping the insured safe and making sure they remain loyal customers to the insurance firm that serves them.

## It is Amazing!

It is amazing how much bad information is being shared on the Internet (or maybe not so amazing to some of our readers)!

For example, for removing soot from fine glassware, one site recommends that a householder use a chemical that was designed to remove ash and soot from a fireplace. Another says that when the soot is remarkably thick, a razor blade may be used to scrape it off.

Razor blades can damage glass and if the piece is part of a priceless collection, when you are done, the collection will have a price and it won't be high!

Another web site recommends that to clean soot and ash from glass, one should take a sheet of wet newspaper, dip it in ashes and use this combination to remove the particles that are already there.

Acid cleaners can etch glass, ash and newspaper can create thousands of micro-scratches that leave the glass "milky" and badly damaged. Anything metallic can (of course) damage glass – which is why you will never see a true restoration professional using any of these primitive methods.

If you ever see someone using techniques like them – they are not trained contents pros.



## Did You Know?



After a fire, brass and copper items should be removed from the house and cleaned immediately. Soot residue can actually etch brass, copper and other metals in just 24 hours. Contents crews will often clean brass lighting fixtures, faucets, etc., that can't be removed, then coat them with a petroleum gel to protect them from any further damage.

You may notice that the contents pros put aluminum foil or plastic "tabs" under the legs of tables, chairs, couches etc., until the moving team can get them off wet carpeting.

It works!



**Fire \* Smoke \* Water**  
1180 Douglas Rd., Batavia, IL 60510  
**Ph. 630.761.8100**  
[www.mwrestore.com](http://www.mwrestore.com)

**Specializing in Contents Restoration! Professional pack out and inventory service. With restorative cleaning for all types of contents: Antiques, electronics, art work, fine fabrics, rugs, wood furniture, documents, books, photos, and more!**

## Coming Up In the Next Issues of Contents Solutions



**SLOW DOWN TIME**  
To Speed up Results



**CONTENTS PROS**  
The Difference That Makes the Difference



**SOFT CONTENTS**  
Restore Not Replace!

*Contents Solutions!* May not be reproduced in whole or in part except by prior written permission of the publishers. Contents Solutions is created each month by the research team at Total Contentz who are solely responsible for its publication and the material contained within. ©2010



**Fire \* Smoke \* Water**  
1180 Douglas Rd., Batavia, IL 60510  
**Ph. 630.761.8100**  
[www.mwrestore.com](http://www.mwrestore.com)