

Recent pesticide incidents under investigation

September 2015

A Decatur hotel desk clerk reported that the hotel's owner had required a housekeeper to apply an unlabeled substance in guest rooms for bed bugs, and that the application had made the housekeeper sick. An IDPH inspector found that the pesticide was labeled, and was a cleaning agent whose label said it would kill insects, containing a "green" active ingredient. Illness resulting from the application could not be substantiated.

A hotel guest reported bed bugs in his room at a Rockford hotel, as well as "white dust" on the entire floor under and around the bed, and on the box spring such that dust would billow out when he sat on the bed. He requested another room and the new room had dust "inches thick" around the bed. An IDPH inspector found minimal evidence of a powder and took a sample of the material, which hotel management later admitted and was believed to be "JT Eaton Kills Bedbugs and Crawling Insects Powder" containing silicon dioxide and diatomaceous earth. The owner will be cited for misapplying a pesticide.

A Chicago woman and her mother reported the building management had sent someone to treat for roaches, after they reported the pest problem. A man calling himself "Chuck" arrived in an unmarked vehicle, said he worked for "Johnson Exterminating," and allegedly sprayed inside cabinets, blinds, walls, etc., until they were dripping. He was wearing no uniform and left no receipt. No such company is licensed with IDPH. Investigation is ongoing.

A former employee of a pest control company he called "The Pest Guys" in Lebanon said he'd received no training and no PPE with which to perform pest control services for the company. He said the company encourages its applicators to over-apply Termidor (fipronil) and treat areas not listed on the label, in order to reduce callbacks. He said residences are treated without telling residents to vacate until the pesticide has dried. "The Pest Guys" were not found in the IDPH database, but the address the ex-employee gave for them is the address of "Turf Gator" a licensed lawn care & pest control company. Investigation is ongoing.

A Fairview Heights couple reported their apt. had been treated 3 times in August for roaches, twice by the maintenance man and once by a pest control company. Subsequently they had to spend a night in a hotel due to extreme odor in the unit, and the family suffered from various symptoms prompting the mother to take her daughters to the hospital where allegedly a diagnosis of pesticide poisoning was allegedly rendered. Pesticide is believed to be Arilon (indoxacarb). Photos and swab samples were taken. Investigation is ongoing.

A Calumet City woman called to report a white powdery residue in her apartment which she said was being picked up on her body and contaminating everything after three bed bug treatments by a company she thought was Bugs-Be-Gone. If this is the company, its license was revoked in 2011 for lack of insurance, and its license is now pending without proof of insurance and payment of fee. When she complained about the residue, the company reportedly told her that people normally just leave the residue. Investigation is ongoing.