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Sep 23, 2009 7:43 am US/Mountain

Unwanted Visitors Found In Library Book Return



Reporting Jodi Brooks

DENVER (CBS4) — The Denver Public Library is dealing with a problem usually found in homes or hotels. They say a customer returned books infested with bedbugs.



1 of 1 Click to enlarge

Bedbugs were found in books placed in the Denver Public Library book return.

The man who was one of the library's most avid users has now been both banned from the library and fined said Denver Public Library spokesperson, Celeste Jackson.

Library workers handling the books left in the drop box noticed the bugs first.

"When we were returning those materials back in to get them off of his card, some of the bugs fell out," said Celeste Jackson.

The books were not your typical popular fiction. They are described as volumes of rare classic literature. The books are not the property of the Denver Public Library. They're part of the inter-library loan system. Those books have been fumigated and the library quarantined.

The library said the customer was aware of the problem.

"We said, sir we think you may have a problem and we're trying to keep this from becoming ... something that really is throughout the library system," Jackson said.

Jackson said after the man was informed he returned more books with bedbugs.

Robert Hancock, a Metro State Associate Professor of Biology studies bedbugs and even keeps some in his office that feed off of his arm.

"Bedbugs are very difficult to kill because they live in cracks and crevices," Hancock said.

To help deal with the problem, Envirotech Pest Solutions offered its services.

"I called to see if they were aware that there were ways to kill the bedbugs through freezing, through heat treatments, through isolating them for a couple years in an encasement," said Debra Kay of Envirotech.

Even with Envirotech's help it was too late. The bug's droppings stained the book pages black. The library destroyed 31 books worth an estimated value of \$12,000.

The library believes it has taken care of the bedbug problem and that it is safe to borrow books, but they said if you think you have a problem with bed bugs in your library books you're asked to contact them. They also ask that customers not return books through the book drop if they think they have a bedbug problem.

The library customer responsible for the bedbugs has been fined the \$12,000 that it will cost to replace the destroyed books.

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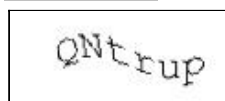
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