



JOHN J. TECKLENBURG  
MAYOR

*City of Charleston*  
*South Carolina*

OFFICE OF  
COMMUNICATIONS

***For Release: June 1, 2017***

## **Charleston Fire Department Bedbug Update**

**Charleston, S.C.**—Today, the Charleston Fire Department issued the following update on recent bedbug outbreaks at city fire stations:

- In response to a report of a possible bedbug bite, Station 19 was re-inspected by a trained K9 crew yesterday afternoon. The K9 "hit" on a single couch in a common area, away from the station dorm. To ensure firefighter safety and in an abundance of caution, personnel from Station 19 were relocated to Stations 12 and 16. Station 19 will be treated today, and personnel will return when it has been found to be clear.
- In a conference call yesterday afternoon, CFD officials reviewed the situation with Dr. Eric Benson, a Clemson University entomologist and one of the region's leading experts on bedbugs and their removal. In addition to confirming that the CFD's current plan to treat the affected stations with heat and nontoxic chemicals is sound, Dr. Benson made a number of specific recommendations to mitigate this outbreak and prevent future infestations, which the department is now working to implement. These recommendations include the use of mattress and box spring covers, as well as the installation of "climb up" monitors for future detection.
- Firefighters at all stations are continuing to follow heightened safety and hygiene protocols, and remain on alert for any signs of bedbug activity.
- Precautionary inspections are proceeding at all City fire stations. Stations 18, 20 and 21 have been inspected today and found to be free of bedbugs. Stations 7, 13 and 19 are scheduled for inspections tomorrow. K9 crews have agreed to work through the weekend to inspect all stations as quickly as possible.
- In keeping with Mayor John Tecklenburg's Tuesday announcement, the CFD is working to ensure that K9 crews are available to inspect the homes of firefighters at affected stations, and that the cost of those inspections is reimbursed.
- Interim Chief John Tippet said, "First, I want our firefighters to know that we are doing everything in our power to bring this problem to an end as quickly as possible, and that we will not rest until they and their loved ones can once again get the good night's sleep they deserve. And second, I'd like to once again salute the outstanding men and women of this department. Their continued dedication and commitment to excellence during this difficult period has truly been remarkable."

**MEDIA CONTACT:** Jack O'Toole, Director of Communications  
Media Relations/Public Information  
(843) 518-3228 | [otoolej@charleston-sc.gov](mailto:otoolej@charleston-sc.gov)