

MANITOBA

Heatin' up the bedroom

WINNIPEG IS AT war with bedbugs, and the latest weapon against them is a system of heaters that warms up a house, cooking the insects to death. It's proven so effective that even the Manitoba government is using it.

Back in 2008, Manitoba Housing partnered with Heat Assault (a company that makes construction-grade heaters used to thaw frozen ground or cure cement) to develop the technology. Dave Funk, who heads up the government agency's in-house pest control group—it has 20 full-time staff, including 10 exterminators—says

they tweaked Heat Assault's system into a powerful bug killer. Insecticides or other heat treatments can be "like bringing a knife to a gunfight," says Clint Rosevear, co-owner of Monarch Pest Control, which also partnered with Heat Assault and markets the system.

After tenants clear out (taking anything that could melt or shrink, like lipstick, choco-

late, or VHS tapes), exterminators set up glycol heaters in the infested space and turn the heat up to over 50° C to "achieve kill," says Rosevear. "With six heaters in a 4,000-sq.-foot home, we could be done in five hours." A house generally costs around \$2,000; larger spaces can be up to \$4,000.



Manitoba Housing is responsible for about 1,300 buildings, and Funk says the equipment is in operation about three days a week. It's also used on occasion to assist other government agencies: the Manitoba Lotteries Corp. recently needed some

furniture cooked before donating it to charity. Rosevear recalls one client who had a "beautiful record collection" and was told to remove it before the treatment. "The guy was so stressed about the bugs, and he said, 'I don't care,'" says Rosevear. "I just want everything dead, please." Luckily, the records survived. **KATE LUNAU**