

HEALTH HAZARDS from Rodents

- ✓ Rodents contaminate food and can make people sick.
- ✓ Rodents leave urine and fecal droppings wherever they travel, feed or nest.
- ✓ More than 200 germs can be transmitted by rodents in their saliva, fecal droppings or urine.
- ✓ A protein in rodent urine can cause allergic reactions in some people.
- ✓ Rodents can cause house fires by gnawing on wires.
- ✓ Baby rodents mature in 2-5 months and can produce up to six litters a year. A pair of rats and their offspring could multiply to 278 rats in one year!

How to Identify and Control



RATS

and



MICE



Town of Holliston
Board of Health
703 Washington St.
Holliston MA 01746

Credit to: Courtesy of Fairfax County BOH

RATS and MICE: An Introduction

Rats and mice are rodents that are commonly found living near people. They can be very destructive to homes, and can carry germs that make people sick. They often make their nests in and around people's homes and office buildings.

The most common rodents encountered by residents in Massachusetts are the Norway rat and the house mouse. Both of these rodents are very good at jumping, climbing, swimming, gnawing and squeezing through very small spaces.



**Common
(Norway) RAT**

The Norway rat digs and travels through burrows, and will nest up to 150 feet from its food supply. It can make a nest in your home by gnawing holes in sheds and walls, etc., or squeezing through cracks and crevices in foundations, vents, etc.

FACT: Rats can squeeze through spaces as small as a quarter!



House MOUSE

The house mouse usually makes a nest in stored materials indoors, but can also live outside, burrowing in areas around fields and lawns. Mice often become a problem in the fall when they enter homes to seek warmth. Mice tend to nest only 10 to 30 feet from their food supply.

FACT: Mice can squeeze through spaces as small as a dime!

Is Your Home Open to RATS and MICE?



Rats and mice often make their nests in and around people's homes and office buildings. Rodents are not picky about economic level or social status. If your home or building can provide shelter and a food source, you are inviting rats and mice to move in!

How Do Rodents Get In?

Rats and mice can crawl through very small spaces (under doors, into crevices, etc.) and when they can't fit, then they simply gnaw and chew their way through.

Common Entry-Ways for Rodents:

- ✓ gaps under doors
- ✓ pipe and wire chases
- ✓ cracks in foundations
- ✓ crawl space doors and vents
- ✓ vents or other holes without screens
- ✓ holes that have been chewed in plastic, wood, drywall
- ✓ holes that have been dug in the dirt or grass

How to Know if You Have RATS and MICE

The most common signs of rats and mice are the evidence they leave behind, such as burrows, fecal droppings, tracks, chewed out holes in walls, chewed wires, urine stains and nesting materials. Rodents are more likely to be seen or heard shortly after dark and in the early morning.



The holes that rats chew in walls tend to be the size of a tennis ball (about 2" to 3" diameter)



Rat fecal dropping shown actual size



Mouse fecal dropping shown actual size

Rodent Burrows

Rodents use burrows to move from place to place. Burrows are typically found around concrete slabs and building foundations, under materials stored outdoors, and along fence rows.

An active burrow entrance is usually seen as a hole in the ground, clear of leaves and debris.

Active burrow runways are often clean and smooth, and frequently follow along a wall or fence.



To find out if the burrow is active, loosely fill the opening of the hole with dirt. If a rodent is using that burrow, the hole will reappear. Rodents cannot be eliminated by blocking their burrows. They can simply dig another burrow.

How to CONTROL Rodents

To control rodents, you **MUST** remove their food, shelter and entry points to your home or other buildings.

Clean Up — Eliminate Food Sources

Remove all rodent food.

Trash and garbage should be contained in a rodent-proof container, such as a trash can with a tight-locking lid. Trash cans and dumpsters should be cleaned regularly and their doors and/or lids should close tightly. Prevent bird seed from falling to the ground. Piles of wood, furniture and other yard debris should be removed. Grass should be cut low to the ground. Plants, bushes and branches should be trimmed away from the home or building. Pet waste should always be picked up and disposed properly.



Rodent Proof Your Home and Buildings

Holes larger than a dime, and cracks larger than the diameter of a pencil, should be sealed to prevent rodents from entering your home or other buildings. The gaps around pipe and wire chases should also be sealed. All doors, including the garage door, should have weather stripping. Tight fitting crawl space doors and vent covers should be in good repair. Check periodically around your home and other buildings to correct problem areas.

Sealants that are strong and durable should be used.

- ✓ steel wool
- ✓ putty
- ✓ copper stuffing
- ✓ expandable foam
- ✓ cement

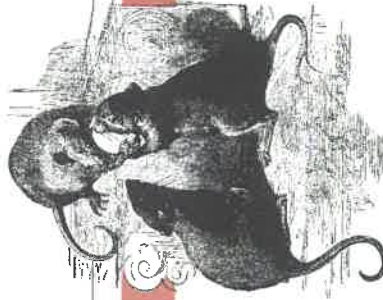


Gap around hose



Gap sealed with metal plate

Garbage is an all-you-can-eat buffet for rodents



WHAT RODENTS EAT

- | | |
|-----------------------------------|---------------------------------|
| trash and garbage in plastic bags | pet feces |
| spilled or discarded food | flower bulbs and seeds |
| kitchen scraps | bird seed spilled on the ground |
| pet food | food from low-hanging feeders |

ELIMINATE Rodents by Trapping or Baiting

Trapping (recommended for indoors)

Trapping is the recommended method for rodent control inside a structure. Many varieties of traps are available. Snap traps and glue boards are best used when just a few rodents are present. Catch traps for multiple rodents are best for larger numbers of rodents. All traps are more effective when peanut butter or bacon is used to lure the rodent to the trap. Keep the trap in one place to give rodents a chance to get used to it being there. Always follow manufacturer instructions.

Baiting with Pesticide

This method of rodent control uses a food source mixed with poison. There are many types of baits. Some require repeated doses over several days before the rodent dies. Other baits kill the rodent after a single dose.

Baits must be contained in tamper-proof containers, to help protect children, pets and unintended wildlife. Baits should be placed in areas where rodents are already feeding.

Rats tend to avoid new objects and foods.

Mice are not suspicious of new objects, but tend to nibble and may not eat enough to get a lethal dose. Check the bait daily and replace it as needed.

Always follow manufacturer instructions when using toxic baits or any pesticide.

Hire a Professional

You may choose to hire a licensed pest management professional, who can provide expertise in effectively and safely placing pesticides. This is recommended for eliminating large numbers of rodents (infestations).

