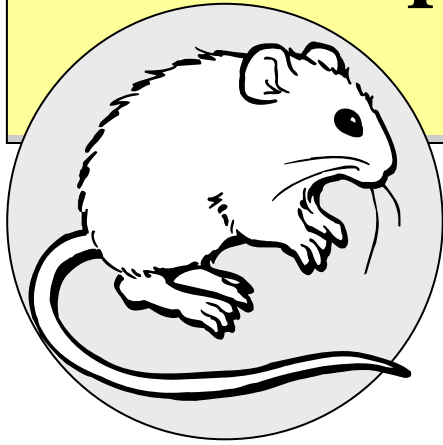


# PEST CONTROL RODENTS



## Identifying the Pest

The house mouse has dark grey back and a light grey belly.

The deer mouse has a grey or brown back and a white belly.

Proper identification of the pest is important when selecting effective prevention and control measures. Contact your Public Health Inspector if you need help identifying this or any other pest.

## Health Concerns

Rodents are “vectors”. This means that infected rodents can transmit disease causing organisms to people. Illness can occur :

- ◇ if you eat or drink food contaminated with rodent droppings (feces) or urine.
- ◇ If you are bitten by a rodent or a rodent flea.
- ◇ If you breathe in dust that is contaminated with rodent droppings, urine or saliva.

Deer mice are known carriers of the hantavirus which can cause hantavirus pulmonary syndrome, a potentially fatal illness. An infected rodent will not show signs of infection. Therefore all rodents should be treated as though infected with the hantavirus.

## Identifying Infestations

Food and shelter may attract rodents towards and eventually inside buildings.

Rodents are most active at night, or when people are not present. Look for signs of an infestation even if live or dead rodents have not been seen.

### ✓ Check Outside For:

- ◇ Ground burrows, generally 5cm - 7.5 cm (2 - 3 inches) wide, found outdoors next to walls, along foundations or under debris or shrubbery. Adult mice can enter through spaces as small as one cm wide.

### ✓ Check Inside For:

- ◇ Grease marks (from the oil on rodent hair), seen as a dark smudge, usually along walls or solid structures
- ◇ Rodent droppings, dark brown in color, 1/8 to 1/4 inch long and pointed at one or two ends.
- ◇ Rodent urine odour
- ◇ Rodent tracks
- ◇ Gnawing marks and damage.

Make sure to check food storage areas such as pantries and cupboards for rodent droppings or holes in food packages.

## Controlling Infestations

Effective prevention and control requires that you rodent - proof the building, eliminate nesting sites, remove food and water, and trap rodents.

### ✗ Rodent-Proof the Building

- ◇ All openings greater than 6 mm (1/4 inch) should be sealed. Seal holes in walls, spaces around pipes, and electric cables. Coarse steel wool, sheet metal, hard ware cloth, mortar and caulking can be used.
- ◇ Areas around doors and windows should be tight fitting.
- ◇ Space between the floor and door should not be wider than 6mm (1/4 inch) wide. The door should be fitted with metal kick plates or weather stripping.
- ◇ All vents should be screened with wire mesh, at least 6mm (1/4 inch) and 16 gauge strength.

### ✗ Eliminate Nesting Sites

Nesting sites are places where rodents live and breed. Find and remove those inside and around the outside of your building.

Examples of possible shelter:

- dumpsters
- rock or wood piles
- inside abandoned furniture
- spaces between double walls, false ceilings and floors
- under large appliances

Organize storage rooms and remove clutter so that food and paper products are stored at least 15cm (6 inches) off the floor, and 30 cm - 45cm (12 inches - 18 inches) from the wall.

## **X Remove Food and Water**

- ◇ Store foods in containers with tight fitting lids. Use food grade plastic, metal or glass containers.
- ◇ Store food off the floor.
- ◇ Keep food storage areas, shelves and floors clean. Clean up spilled foods.
- ◇ Keep kitchen sink free of dirty dishes.
- ◇ Keep garbage in covered containers with tight fitting lids.

Any food product contaminated with rodent droppings, urine or that has holes in it, must be discarded!

Examples of food sources:

- open dumpsters
- compost piles
- natural food such as nuts and seeds
- any indoor or outdoor garbage
- pet food left open over night

## **X Trap Rodents**

Use spring loaded traps and/ or catch-all live traps to monitor and control the rodent population.

- ◇ Bait traps with foods like cheese, cake, peanut butter and seeds.
- ◇ Place traps near the nest, at a right angle to the run (usually a wall). Place traps no more than three meters apart.
- ◇ Check traps daily. Remove dead rodents using gloves. Avoid direct contact with the carcass.
- ◇ If rodenticides are used in bait stations, use those with low human toxicity.

**DO NOT USE RODENTICIDES  
IN AREAS WHERE CHILDREN  
AND PETS CAN REACH THEM.**

## **Cleaning up Droppings & Removal of Carcasses**

Be very careful when cleaning contaminated areas and when handling rodent carcasses.

### **Important Personal Safety Tips!**

- ⇒ Avoid disturbing dirt or dust.
- ⇒ Wear plastic or rubber gloves and a nuisance dust mask or high efficiency particulate air filter (HEPA) respirator.

When cleaning is complete:

- ⇒ Wash gloved hands with disinfectant, soap and water.
- ⇒ Remove gloves, and wash hands with soap and water.

1. Wet the rodent carcass, nest and areas contaminated with droppings or urine with disinfectant before cleaning the area.

**To make a disinfection solution, pour 1 part (5.25%) household bleach into 9 parts water and mix.**

2. Place the wet items in a plastic garbage bag. Double bagging is recommended. Seal the bag and discard in a garbage container with a tight fitting lid, preferably located outdoors.
3. Mop the contaminated areas with a solution of water, detergent and disinfectant. A second mopping with disinfectant is optional.

**DO NOT VACUUM OR SWEEP DRY SURFACE BEFORE MOPPING.**

4. Spray dirt floors with disinfectant solution. Avoid creating dust or aerosols.
5. Disinfect contaminated carpet with a household disinfectant, or steam-clean or shampoo using commercial-grade equipment.

Test a small area of carpet before using any disinfectant on it as some (for example chlorine) will discolor carpet.

6. Remove furniture that rodents have nested in IF the nest cannot be removed easily.
7. Wash bedding and clothing that may be contaminated. Use detergent and hot water, and machine dry using a high heat setting.

### References

1. Bennet G. W., Corrigan R.M. & Owens J.M., Trumans's Scientific Guide To Pest Control Operations, 4th edition, A Purdue University/Edgell Communications Project 1988.
2. Canada Communicable Disease Report, First Reported Cases of Hantavirus Pulmonary Syndrome in Canada, Health Canada, Vol. 20-15, August 15, 1994.
3. Urban Home Composting "Rodent Resistant Bins & Environmental Health Standards", City Farmer, Canada Urban Agriculture Council, 1992.

Contact Alberta Environmental Pesticide Management Branch at 297-7602 regarding Regulations on the application of pesticides at rental properties.

Contact a licensed pest control company for information on chemical treatment. They are listed in the telephone directory, yellow pages under "Extermination".

**For more information  
contact  
Environmental Health  
Monday to Friday,  
8:00 am-4:15 pm  
at 403-943-2295**

