



# Rats and Mice Fact Sheet

Rats and mice are well adapted to living in close association with humans. Their presence is undesirable due to their ability to physically damage structures, spoil and contaminate food and transmit diseases to humans.

They may live and nest within buildings indefinitely, provided they have access to food and water. Being creatures of habit, they will travel the same routes to the food sources therefore assisting us in the most appropriate location to place baits.

## How to Identify Rodent Activity

Rats and mice are most active during night time. The following signs may indicate rodent activity:

1. Droppings - found near shelters/nests, feeding areas, travel paths. Travel Paths - greasy markings found on surfaces in continual contact with dirty rodent fur.
2. Burrows - found outside, along walls, under buildings, in creek banks, roof insulation, and in stacked materials.
3. Gnawing - rodents gnaw a wide variety of material including woodwork, electrical cables and food containers.
4. Noise - scratching, fighting, squeaking, clawing and gnawing often heard during the night time.

## How Do You Prevent Rat or Mouse Infestation

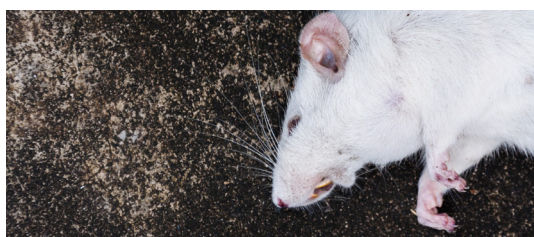
- Remove all food sources: cover bins, close cupboards, store food in sealed containers with lids, clean up bird seed from cages.
- Remove or prevent access to breeding sites: Block up holes; clean yards, sheds, under houses and in attic spaces; clear rubbish and lumber.
- Trap and / or use bait to eliminate rats: Regular methods include rodent bait, snap traps and cage traps.
- Keep yards and fowl runs completely clear of waste food.
- Do not leave any water around the house. Note: This may not be possible if you have domestic animals that require drinking water.
- Stack timber and boxes at least 30cm above the ground and 30cm away from walls, so rats can't burrow under them.
- Keep grass cut short and dispose of litter at a refuse centre.



## Rodent-Proofing Your Home

Once your home is free of rats and mice, you can prevent their return by:

- Immediately repairing any breakage in wall linings and roof cavities
- Placing metal gauze over the ends of building pipes
- Trimming overhanging branches so rats can't access your roof via trees
- Sealing or covering any holes around the house
- Removing or fitting a cover, grate or plug to a disused pipe



## Bait with Care

Baiting around buildings is an option if trapping fails, but needs to be done carefully. Use only baits that have been approved by the Australian Pesticides and Veterinary Medicines Authority and apply baits strictly according to the label.

Take great caution to avoid accidental poisoning of children and pets. Note also that a downside of baiting is nasty smells from decomposing carcasses. Do not use baits inside the house. They can encourage mice to come inside. Bait the perimeter of buildings but cover bait stations to protect children, cats and dogs.

Remember to store poisons where children, domestic animals and wildlife cannot reach them.



## Trappers Guide

- The old-fashioned mousetraps are still effective when numbers are small. Here are some tips
- Use several traps in each room
- Set traps at right angles to the wall with the trigger next to the wall
- Leave a clear 50 mm run along the wall to make sure that mice run along the traps
- Use fresh bait every day – bread crust, bacon rind, raisins and peanut butter are all good
- Cardboard soaked in canola or other oil also makes a good bait
- Cornmeal or wheat germ dropped from 100 mm above the set traps will attract mice to unbaited traps
- If mice become trap-shy, repeat trapping after 30 days
- Dispose of live mice humanely

## How Council can assist?

Council strongly encourages residents to discuss the issue with relevant householders if they think their rats and mice are coming from their neighbour's property. Should this approach prove ineffective, Dispute Settlement Centre provides a range of free, confidential dispute resolution services. They may be able to assist without the need for expensive legal proceedings and can be contacted on 1800 658 528 (toll free).

