

How to Clean Up After Rodents

Hantavirus precaution!

Deer mice can shed hantavirus in their urine, which can be fatal to people. Allow buildings, sheds or homes that have been closed up to air out for 30 minutes before cleaning.

1. Wear latex or rubber gloves and a dust mask while cleaning.
2. Mix a solution of 1 cup bleach to 10 cups water or use a household disinfectant.
3. Don't vacuum, sweep or dry dust areas when cleaning. This disturbs dried rodent urine and feces that may contain harmful bacteria or viruses.
4. Wet down all contaminated areas, dead rodents, droppings and nesting areas with a disinfectant before cleaning. Allow the disinfectant to set for 10 minutes.
5. Disinfect counter tops, cabinets and drawers, floors and baseboards.
6. Steam clean carpets, rugs, and upholstered furniture.
7. Dispose of dead rodents and contaminated items by double bagging in plastic bags and placing in your garbage can outside.
8. Wash clothes and bedding with detergent and hot water. Set the dryer on high.
9. When you are done, disinfect or throw away the gloves you used. Wash your hands or shower with soap and hot water.

Making & Using a Disinfectant Solution

Mix a solution of 1 cup bleach to 10 cups of water.



Apply generously to the contaminated area and allow to set for 10 minutes before cleaning.

Take Responsibility Be a Good Neighbor

You can help prevent rodent problems in your neighborhood. In King County it is the responsibility of property owners to prevent conditions on their property that provide a home or food source for rats. You can do this by maintaining your property in a manner that is not attractive to rodents. After food sources and nesting places have been removed and rats have been eliminated, your property should be maintained so that the rats will not return.



RESOURCES

Report rat problems to Public Health. Call 206-263-9566 or online at www.kingcounty.gov/health/rats

King County rodent regulations: Title 8 Zoonotic Disease Prevention www.kingcounty.gov/health/BOH

Information about diseases from rodents www.kingcounty.gov/health/zoonotics

Public Health 
Seattle & King County

Public Health—Seattle & King County
Environmental Health Services
Rodent Prevention Program
401 5th Ave. Suite 1100
Seattle, WA 98104
206-263-9566

Available in Alternate Formats

September 2009

RATS UNWANTED



Artwork by Leah Helms

Four Steps to
Prevent and Control
Rodent Infestations

A Guide for
Homeowners and Tenants

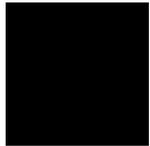
Rat Facts

Rats eat everything!

Rats climb, jump and swim. If a squirrel can climb it - a rat can climb it.

Rats gnaw through plastic, wood, soft metals, electrical wires (sometimes causing fires) and even cinderblock and brick.

Rats squeeze into tiny spaces, nest where it is dark and warm and can produce a litter of pups (babies) every 3 to 4 weeks!



Actual size hole
a rat can enter



Actual size hole
a mouse can enter

STEP 1

Take Away Their Food

Rodents will eat anything. To get rid of rats you must get rid of their food.

Common outdoor food sources include: bird food (all varieties), squirrel food, pet food, food waste in open home compost bins, fallen fruit from fruit trees, blackberries, garbage, grass seed and pet feces.



What do rats eat when they get inside?

The same foods we do. How we store foods in our own home is important to preventing rats. If rats and mice are getting into your home **store foods that are usually packaged in cardboard boxes or plastic bags in durable containers!**

STEP 2

Exterminate the Rodent Population

Trapping and poisoning are two effective ways to exterminate rodents. Some rodent problems may be too difficult to control on your own and you may need to hire a licensed pest control operator. You can find them in the yellow pages of the telephone directory under "Pest Control Services"

Trapping

Trapping is the preferred method of killing rats indoors. Wooden snap traps are inexpensive and effective. Peanut butter usually works as a bait. Set the trap and place it in an area with the most rodent activity. It should be placed about 3 inches from a wall. The trigger should face the wall. The traps may be placed in a box with openings on both ends to protect children and pets.



Poisoning

Poisoned rodents may die in floors and walls causing an odor. Poisons are not recommended for use inside homes or buildings. Rat poison for use outdoors is available from many hardware stores and can also be purchased from some professional pest control services or a store that specializes in pest control products.

Rat poison should always be used in secured bait station to keep it away from children and pets. Only use it according to the directions on the label.



Bait station or "Bait box"

STEP 3

Keep Rodents Out of Your Yard

Don't make your yard a nesting zone for rodents. Don't provide them with a place to live and raise their young.

Rats will nest in:

- Outdoor piles of garbage and junk
- Under wood piles or lumber. Stack wood piles 18 inches off the ground
- Under blackberry bushes, shrubs, vines and in tall grasses that are not trimmed or cut back
- In cars, appliances, furniture and carpet that has been put outside and is no longer being used
- In holes under buildings



STEP 4

Keep Rodents Out of Your Home

Small openings in homes, buildings or sheds must be sealed to prevent rodents from entering.

- Check for openings where pipes or wires enter the building, under eaves, and around foundations, doors and windows.
- Use cement, ¼ inch hardware cloth, wire mesh or steel wool to seal openings.
- Crawl spaces and attics must be sealed to prevent rodent access.
- Rodents often enter through open doors, windows or through pet doors. Install kick plates to prevent access under doors.

