

**The Town does not provide pest control services or advice regarding private property. If you are experiencing a problem with pests on your own private property, please contact a private pest control company.**

### **Rat Control Measures**

Rats like to live where people live and they can thrive on just an ounce of food and water a day. If they come upon a human-inhabited place that offers them food, water and shelter, they will stay.

Rats are attracted to small spaces because they feel protected in them. If a space is small enough for rodents to access, but not for their predators such as cats and dogs, rats will make a home there.

Rats can make homes in anything that provides shelter including sheds and garages, wood or rock piles, under enclosed patios and stairwells, and in unwanted items such as old water tanks, appliances, building materials and tires.

Some key points for rat prevention, rat proofing, and eliminating rats are found below:

### **Prevent Rats**

- ✓ Do not store garbage outside; place it at the curb no earlier than 6 a.m. on your garbage collection day
- ✓ Remove bird feeders or attach catch basins so bird feed does not fall on the ground
- ✓ Remove pet food right after feeding and do not leave it outside overnight.
- ✓ Trim plants near buildings so that 6 to 8 inches above ground is clear. Trim branches of trees or shrubs to prevent access to roofs or balconies.
- ✓ Do not pile wood on the ground - instead lay it against raised posts.
- ✓ Remove fallen fruit and nuts from your yard.
- ✓ Compost properly - do not add fish or meat to backyard compost bin
- ✓ Do not store old cars or furniture outside.
- ✓ Repair any plumbing leaks to remove a water source.
- ✓ Cover pools and whirlpools when not in use.
- ✓ Lumber, rocks, garbage, building materials, and other unwanted or unused materials should be removed
- ✓ Do not enclose the base of patios and raised stairwells, not even with lattice

## **Rat Proofing**

- ✓ Make it impossible for rats to get into any structure
- ✓ Repair all openings with a strong material (cement, metal, etc.) to prevent entry.
- ✓ Use screens in drains and tightly seal where utilities enter buildings
- ✓ Install a metal kicking plate or heavy weather stripping beneath doors, including garage doors
- ✓ If building a patio or shed on a grade, bury sheet metal 30 cm (12 inches) below the grade and skirting
- ✓ Check for signs of chewing damage, fecal droppings or squeaks, chirps or gnawing sounds coming from within walls and ceilings

## **Eliminate rats**

- ✓ Spring loaded traps: bait three of them in a row. Bait with dried fruit, peanut butter mixed with oats, or cheese. Set the traps at 'right angles' (90 degrees) to the walls where the rodents are known to travel, with the bait side of the trap toward the wall.
- ✓ Rat extermination is best done by a professional pest control operator. Look up 'Pest Control Services' in the Yellow Pages or online.

## **Prevention Control**

There are four steps which are usually required in any rat control program:

- Remove food sources
- Remove potential shelters
- Rat proofing
- Eliminate rats

The 'bottom line' to long-term rodent control is the fact that rodents must have adequate food and shelter to live and thrive. Thus, whenever there is an abundance of rats (or mice), there is usually also an abundance of food and shelter available to the rats. The removal or reduction of these factors alone via sanitation practices will have a tremendous impact on reducing rodent populations, even without the use of any rodenticides or traps.

## **Remove Food Sources**

Around residences, it is important homeowners conduct proper waste management, storage practices and feeding of pets and wildlife.

- ✓ Garbage should be properly contained and removed regularly.
- ✓ Bird feeders should be removed or designed to eliminate rat access by attaching a catch pan to prevent spillage on the ground.
- ✓ Pet owners should feed dogs and cats only what they will eat and then remove the food and any spillage.
- ✓ Store pet, wildlife food and lawn seed in an area not accessible to rats or in rodent-proof containers.

## **Remove Potential Shelters**

Rats must have shelter and nesting sites in order to survive and multiply. Rats move undetected along runways which are sheltered by tall grass, shrubs or rubbish. They nest in well protected, undisturbed places; under wood piles, under improperly maintained compost bins, under patios & sheds and in unwanted items such as old furniture, appliances and vehicles.

- ✓ Grass, weeds and other undesirable vegetation adjacent to buildings and fences should be removed.
- ✓ If the area around building is landscaped, it should be properly maintained.
- ✓ Lumber, rocks piles, rubbish, old equipment, construction materials, etc., should all be eliminated if possible.
- ✓ Items which must be kept should be stored at least 46 cm (18 inches) off the ground and 30 cm (12 inches) away from walls and fences.

## **Rat Proofing**

The most successful and permanent form of rat control is to 'build them out', that is, make it impossible for rats to gain entrance into any area or structure where they are not wanted. All places where 'food' is stored, processed, prepared, or fed to pets or wildlife should be rat-proofed. If rats can be denied access to hiding places and food they can not survive.

- ✓ Drains and conduits:
  - Use 12 mm (½ inch) screens with 6 mm (¼ inch) holes in drains. Keep them in good repair, tightly seal all areas where utilities enter buildings.
- ✓ Foundations:
  - Construct concrete floors and foundations of high quality materials.

- In the case of patios and sheds built on grade, use sheet metal buried 30 cm (12 inches) below grade to skirt the structure.
- Always use screens in open doors, windows and crawl space vents.

The spaces beneath doors, especially garage doors, should be checked and reduced using a metal kicking plate or heavy weather stripping.

Norway rats can be deterred from climbing vertical pipes by applying a 30 cm (12 inch) band of glossy paint around the pipe or conduit.

## **Eliminate Rats**

As the Norway rat has such an enormous reproductive capacity, controlling the spread of this species means eradication, followed by year-round inspections to ensure the problem is corrected.

In a community-wide rodent control program, poisoning rats is an essential part of the plan. Timing of the poisoning effort is of utmost importance. Rat poisoning methods are applied most effectively before sanitation and cleaning programs are begun to prevent out migration of rats to other areas. Also early in the spring where burrows are easily recognized and prior to initial breeding of mature rats.

### **Forms of eradication:**

Traps  
 Glue boards  
 Rodenticides  
 Fumigation  
 Ultra sonic devices

Whichever method of eradication is used, it is best conducted by a professional Pest Control Operator. Look for 'Pest Control Services' in the Yellow Pages or online.

## **Precautions and Legal Implications**

- ✓ All rodenticides are potentially dangerous enough to cause death to animals other than rodents, so be sure to place them where they are inaccessible to children, pets, livestock and wildlife.
- ✓ Read and follow the rodenticide label instructions.
- ✓ Dispose of dead rats immediately and avoid handling rats with bare hands.
- ✓ When baiting outdoors, put all bait deep into burrows or in covered rodent bait stations. If placed directly into burrows, baits must be contained in their original packets unopened. This will prevent spoilage caused by moisture and insects, as well as making it recognizable as a poison. The burrow should then be covered to prevent access by children or non-target animals.

- ✓ When baits are placed indoors, use covered bait stations where possible. It is legal to use open bait trays indoors only when they are protected under equipment, furniture or some other fixed structure which limits access to humans or animals.

**Note:** We strongly advise against baiting indoors as there is always a chance of rodents dying in the walls and creating a foul odour.

Also, no matter what form of eradication method is used, it has to be placed where the rat will come into contact with it, ie. adjacent to a wall, behind objects.