

CONTROLLING RODENT INFESTATION

Rats like to live where people live. They quickly adjust to the neighborhood. Rats can thrive on just an ounce of food and water daily. Rats prefer to feed in and around homes, restaurants, and businesses. Rats get the shelter they need from tall weeds and grass, fences and walls, rubbish piles and abandoned appliances.

If rats are living in your neighborhood, there are steps you should take, A community effort works best and remove their food and shelter source.

HOW THEY GET IN

- through cracks or holes in walls or foundations, even holes as small as a dime;
- by digging under house foundations if they are shallow enough;
- through open windows, doors, sidewalk grates, or vents (check in the basement or walls for vent openings);
- by squeezing through openings in the foundation or wall for pipes or wires;
- through floor drains, quarter inch gaps under doors, letter drops and fan openings; and

KEEPING THEM AWAY

It is much easier to keep rats out than to get rid of them once they have moved in.

- Don't feed rats. Limit their food source by placing trash in covered metal or heavy-duty plastic trash containers.
- Fix plumbing leaks to cut off their water source.
- Keep the yard neat and clean.
 - Remove uneaten pet foods.
 - Don't fill up your bird feeder.
 - Avoid storing food in basements.
- Remove rats' shelter.
- Outdoors, restrict their shelter by rat-proofing all buildings in the area and removing outside shelters like appliances, junk piles, old fences, and walls. Keep the property, Including alleys and yards, clean and trash-free. Pile wood and other stored items at least
- Protect basement windows with a 1/2 inch wire mesh (called hardware cloth)

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HOW TO GET RID OF THEM

The two best ways to remove rats are traps or poison. The use of either requires caution!

Traps.

- Choose wooden base snap traps. Set out several traps at a time - at least 10 if you think there are many rats. Place the traps behind boxes and against walls, so that the rats must pass over the trigger. Be sure the traps are out of the reach of children and pets! Fasten food attractive to rats, such as peanut butter, raisin bread, bacon, or gumdrops, tightly on the trigger of each trap. Don't let the trap run out of bait. An advantage to traps is that they are less of a hazard to children and pets than poison.

Poison.

- Warfarin, chlorophacinone and Pival are all rat poisons. Rat poisons must be fed daily for six to 10 days. Read the poison label before you begin and be careful to follow all steps.
- Watch out for children and pets! Make sure the baits are clearly marked, and put them in low traffic, secure areas that might attract rats, such as under or behind boards, boxes, pipes, or cans, and out of the rain and snow. If, after a month or two, there are still signs of rats, skip a month and start again. Stopping for a month and then starting helps keep the rats from building up resistance to the poison.

If you do have rats, it's a community problem and the entire neighborhood should work together.

Once the rat infestation is under control, the goal is to prevent them from coming back. Help yourself and your neighbors by keeping trash picked up and placed in covered, rat-resistant containers. Promptly remove or repair any shelter areas, such as fences and old appliances. Periodically check for new entry holes into neighborhood buildings, and seal them up quickly.