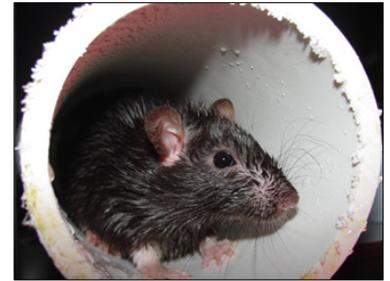




Control of Rodents in an Urban Area

The primary goal of the Health Department Rodent Control Program is to prevent human exposure to rodent caused diseases by controlling rodent infestations in the community. This is achieved by eliminating any food and water sources, sealing entries into homes, and successfully trapping rodents.



As a property owner, you play a key role in rodent control in the community. You can help prevent rodent infestation by:

1. Clean Up: Clean up by eliminating rodent food sources and nesting sites.

- Clean up your home, pick up or eliminate clutter inside and outside your home.
- Store food in thick plastic or metal containers with tight fitting lids.
- Put food away after use. Clean up spilled food right away. Wash dishes and cooking utensils after use.
- Store all garbage and food waste in thick plastic or metal cans with tight fitting lids. Dispose of garbage on a regular basis.
- Outside your home: Get rid of old vehicles, tires, and clutter that mice and rats might use as homes.
- Keep outside cooking areas and grills clean.
- **Do not feed wildlife;** do not leave pet food or water bowls outside in feeding dishes; **keep bird seed off ground.**
- Keep compost bins away from your home.
- Keep woodpiles away from your home. Elevate wood piles at least eighteen inches off ground.
- Eliminate low growing shrubs and plants that cover the ground and provide a perfect location for rodents to live.
- **Keep grass, shrubbery, and vegetation cut short and well-trimmed to eliminate possible nesting site(s) outside your home.**



Keep food in thick plastic or metal containers with tight lids.

2. Seal Up: Seal up all small holes and entries into your home. Mice can squeeze through a hole the size of a nickel and rats can squeeze through a hole the size of a half dollar!

- Locate and seal all holes, gaps, and openings in your home ¼ inch or larger.
- Where to look inside your home: inside, under, and behind kitchen cabinets, refrigerators and stoves. Look inside closets, near floor corners, around the fireplace, around door frames, around the pipes under sinks and washing machines, around floor vents and dryer vents, inside attic, and in the basement or crawl space.



Keep grass, shrubbery, and vegetation cut short.

- Where to look outside your home: in the roof among the rafters, gables, and eaves, around windows, around doors, around the foundations, attic vents and crawl spaces vents, under doors, around holes for electrical, plumbing, cable, and gas lines.
- Seal holes with steel wool. Put caulk around the steel wool to keep it place. Use lath screen, lath metal, cement, hardware cloth, or metal sheeting to fix large holes. These materials can be found at your local hardware store.
- Use flashing around base of house and doors.
- Shed, garages, and outside buildings should also be sealed to prevent the entrance of rodents.
- **If you do not remember to seal up entry holes in your home, rodents will continue to get inside.**



Seal holes on exterior of your house.

3. Trap Up: Trap up rodents in your home to successfully reduce the rodent population.

- Choose appropriate traps and carefully read instructions before setting traps.
- Place traps in rodent runways along walls between nests and feeding areas
- Place traps in attics, basements, and crawlspaces and other areas that do not have regular human traffic, set traps in areas where there is evidence of frequent rodent activity.
- Contact a licensed Pest Control Operator to treat burrows.



Place snap traps inside your home.

Rat burrows: Most rats live in nests or burrows. Burrows are holes in dirt, wood or concrete that range from 1-inch to 4-inches wide. Rodents cannot be eliminated by blocking their burrows, they will dig another burrow.

If you find a rat burrow on your property contact a licensed Pest Control Operator to treat the burrows and eliminate the rodents.



Rat hole chewed in walls



Active rat burrow

Diseases spread by rodents:

There are 35 diseases that can be traced to rodents. Some from handling rodents, contact with rodent feces, urine, or saliva, or through rodent bites. Some diseases known to be spread through direct contact with rodents include Hantavirus, Pulmonary Syndrome, or Tularemia. Other diseases are spread from indirect contact such as Babesiosis or Lyme Disease which can be spread by ticks on the rodents. It is recommended that you avoid all contact with rodents, rodent droppings, and urine as these can be sources of diseases.

Please provide this information to your tenants who reside on your property; and thank you for your efforts to control rodents and prevent infestations in the community.

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www.watertown-ma.gov

For more information visit:
<http://www.cdc.gov/rodents/index.html>