

# Pest Control — Dealing with Rodents

## Pests:

### What is a Pest?

A pest, as defined by the *Federal Pest Control Products Act*, means “an animal, a plant or other organism that is injurious, noxious or troublesome, whether directly or indirectly, and an injurious, noxious or troublesome condition or organic function of an animal, a plant or other organism.”

There are many common pests including rodents (rats and mice), moles, skunks, raccoons, etc. There are easy ways to both identify whether you might have pests and ways to prevent them from living or returning to your property.



### Where Am I Most Likely to Find Rodents on my Property?

Rodents are pests that are found year round. Rodents typically live outdoors and then migrate inside when cool weather approaches. They are found around buildings, in gardens, near garbage or composters, and within homes, including in the roof and in drains.

Rodents are nocturnal animals, meaning that they are most active at night. However, if food and water sources are scarce, or if large infestations occur, rodents will become active during the day.

### How Can I Tell if I Have Rodents on my Property?

1. Look for places where rodents live - most rodents tend to live in nests or burrows. Burrows are holes in dirt or concrete from one to four inches wide, with smooth edges, and can also be found under bushes and plants. They will often have an entrance and exit hole. They will burrow into the ground close to their food source.
2. Look for nests. Rodents nest in any safe location where food and water are available, such as under woodpiles, in abandoned vehicles, between walls or under floors in garages or sheds.
3. Look for droppings. For rats, they are 1/4 to 1/2 inch in length, capsule shaped, with blunt ends and are usually a shiny black (though variable according to diet). They are often times found close to garbage. For mice, they are approximately 3 to 6 mm in length; they are granular in shape and black in colour.
4. Look for holes and gnaw marks on wood and plastic garbage cans.
5. Check walls and grass for signs of runways. Rodents run along the same path many times a day, leaving dark greasy track marks along walls and worn down paths in grass.

## Preventing Rodents:

You can take several simple steps to prevent rodents on your property:

### Remove Clutter

- This is an important step as clutter gives rodents lots of places to hide, sleep, nest and reproduce.
- Remove (and recycle) piles of newspapers, paper bags, cardboard and bottles.
- Clear out your basement and yard.
- Try to store items away from walls and off the ground.

### Maintain Your Yard

- Control weeds, shrubs and bushes as pests are often found in burrows under bushes and plants.
- Keep tall grass, bushes, shrubs and mulch away from building foundations.
- Make space between plants and avoid dense planting.
- Keep gardens free of weeds and trash.



### Manage Your Garbage

- Bring garbage cans and bags to the curb as close to pick-up time as possible.
- Use hard plastic or metal cans with tight fitting lids.
- Always put garbage inside pest proof containers with tight fitting lids.
- If you compost, remember to follow good composting practices:
  - Do not throw food scraps into backyard compost without covering them.
  - Have a pest proof compost container.

### Keep Food Away

- Do not put food out for stray cats, pigeons or squirrels.
- Remove fallen fruit and nuts from your yard.
- Remove pet food right after feeding and do not leave it outside overnight.
- Clean out waste and food from pet enclosures.
- Equip bird feeders with trays and clean spilled seeds often.
- Repair any plumbing leaks to remove a water source, and remember to always cover pools when not in use.

### Eliminate Potential Hiding and Living Places

- Trim plants near buildings so that 15 to 20 cm (6 to 8 inches) above ground is clear. Trim branches of trees or shrubs to prevent access to roofs or balconies.
- Remove unused piles of lumber and old sheds.
- Do not store old cars or furniture outside.
- Store lumber and firewood on stands high-off the ground.



### Keep Rodents Out (Pest-Proofing Your Home)

- Be sure to seal cracks and smalls holes (usually with caulk).
- Close gaps under doors with rodent-resistant metal door sweeps.
- Close window gaps with metal flashing.
- Put screens on vents, especially on lower floors.

**Removing Pests:**

The most effective way to thoroughly eliminate pests from your property is to contact your local pest control agency. These agencies are equipped with the necessary resources to effectively and safely remove any unwanted pests.