

Please Note: Fort Bend County - Environmental Health Department does not provide bait stations, rodenticide or traps to or for the public. If you have questions about rodent prevention or removal the Environmental Health Department can be reached at 281-342-7469.

Rats & Mice



How to Control and Kill Rats and Mice

In your personal battle against rodents such as rats and mice, it is important to remember that you are dealing with an animal that is capable of crawling, climbing, and chewing its way into your home or business. They can flatten themselves out and squeeze through the smallest of openings, even under closed doors. If the hole is not big enough, they can easily chew it or gnaw it to a large enough size so that they can get through. Generally, if a rodent can squeeze its head through an opening, (most rodent's heads are the size of a quarter or smaller), it will eventually get through. This is why your strategy for rat or mice control always starts on the outside of the structure.

There are 3 main species of rats and mice that are of significance in the United States. They are the **Roof Rat** or tree Rat, the **Norway Rat** or ground rat, and the **House Mouse**. Of course there are lots of other species such as field mice, field rats, wharf rats, sewer rats, etc. But the Roof Rats, Norway Rats and the House Mouse are the ones of primary importance. They are the species of common rodents that homeowners and building owners deal with 90% of the time.

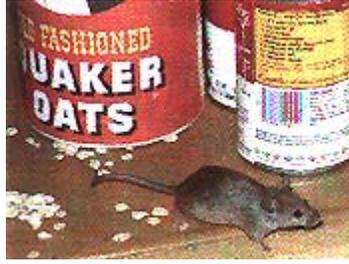


The Roof Rat has a long tail, large ears and has a slender body.
Roof Rats are commonly found in trees, attics, old houses,
and is the #1 rodent round in inner cities.



Norway Rats have small ears, short tail, and have a fat rounded body.

Norway Rats are commonly found in fields, sewers, living under debris, etc.
They are the #1 rat infesting barns, poultry houses and rural areas.



The house mouse generally lives inside or near homes.
They are the #1 mouse infesting inner city homes and buildings.

The bottom line on controlling rats and mice:

* **Limit or eliminate any food sources.** Garbage, pet food, animal feed, etc., are much more acceptable to rodents than any rodent bait. Even though rats and mice will eat almost anything, the effectiveness depends on sanitation practices. If sanitation practices are an issue, the effectiveness of your baiting program will be minimal. In other words, if the outside areas contain garbage, pet food, animal feed, etc, the rats or mice usually will not eat the bait. Clean it up first and your program will be successful.

* **Stop them from getting in by sealing up any holes or cracks where they can find entry into the structure.**

* **Use outdoor bait stations or trap stations to give them what they are looking for (food).**

Residents that clean up their yards, limit food sources and place bait stations traps on their own property have much more success at ridding their homes of rats. Unless absolutely driven to a foreign pole or tree, rodents prefer to stay right in a residential backyard.

Eradication of rodents in any neighborhood is a team effort and requires the relentless effort of the whole neighborhood. Work together with your neighbors. Organize and call the people in your block together. As a group, you can make a commitment to make your neighborhood a place where rats cannot survive.

Outdoors - The first thing to do is to make sure that there are no holes that the rodents can get through. Check all plumbing and electrical entrances, doors, folding garage doors, etc. Also check behind gutters, around plumbing stack flashing, and in the case of raised or pier and beam homes, make sure that they cannot get access under the foundation or skirting or through screened vents. The point is that any hole on the outside of the house can give rats or mice entrance. If the hole is not big enough, the rats or mice will gnaw it to make it bigger. Rats must constantly gnaw and sharpen their teeth to keep them filed down. Rat's teeth grow an average of 7 " per year. This is why they constantly gnaw and chew.



Stuffit

Outside rodent "Exclusion" is very simple in most cases, however most pest control companies may charge upwards of several hundred dollars for this service. Small holes in need of repair can easily be patched with copper or steel wool. Because of the weaving pattern, the copper steel wool tends to get caught in the rodent's teeth making it hard for them to chew through or remove. Placed in pipe entrances, etc. that are smaller than 2" will help to keep rodents out. Larger holes need to be fixed or repaired properly with quality building materials. You may wish to consult a building contractor for this service. It is also very important to make sure that tree limbs, shrubs, etc., do not overhang the structure and are trimmed back at least 5 feet.

Copper/Steel Wool Overhanging tree limbs can provide relatively easy access to the rooftop - especially for roof rats which are capable of jumping several feet.



Feeding Stations

Outside protected feeding stations can be used against the sides of the home or building at 30 - 50 foot intervals. Feeding stations are easily placed behind shrubs, ornamental plants, etc., or openly placed along foundation walls. Inside the stations, Rodenticide is placed. The stations provide the rodents exactly what they are looking for, food and shelter - hopefully before they find their way into your home. Outside rodent bait stations are commonly used around commercial buildings, restaurants, food processing plants, etc., and work extremely well in the residential environment.

Before using any outdoor bait station, make sure that there are not competing food sources for the rodents. Garbage, pet food, animal feed, etc., are much more acceptable to rodents than any rodent bait.

Final Rodenticide:

A rodent that eats a rodenticide dies because of internal hemorrhaging. All rodent baits currently on the market work by thinning the rodent's blood or anticoagulation.



- **Always follow all label precautions and recommendations.**
- Always wash your hands after handling any pesticide.

Final Rodenticide

- **Application Don'ts:**

Don't place rodent bait of any kind in an area accessible to children or pets.

Do not place Rodent bait indoors as it may result in rodents dying inside walls or in attics. If the rodent dies in an unreachable area of your attic or wall, they cannot be removed.

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Indoors - After the outside environment has been cleaned up, sealed up and outdoor bait stations have been used, inside control can begin. The idea is that once the outside environment has been repaired and cleaned up, hopefully, the rodents will be unable to gain entrance to the home or building and will be happy either remaining outside, until they consume the outside bait, or they will be trapped inside.

Do Not Use Rat Baits Indoors !

Do not use rat baits or rodenticides indoors. If a rodent eats a rodenticide indoors, unless it can find its way out of the structure before the effects of the rodenticide set in - usually 3 to 5 days, it will die indoors. There is no such thing as a rodenticide or a rat bait that causes the rodent to become thirsty and look for water. There is also no such thing as a rodenticide that causes the rodents' body to not smell or to dry out during the rotting phase.

If you use a rodenticide indoors and the rodent dies indoors, be prepared for a period of several weeks to months in which pungent foul odors will linger in the air. A rotting animal carcass usually bloats and the resulting body fluids will seep out and cause the odors. Flies and other insects can be attracted to the rotting rodent carcass resulting in new problems. The bottom line: Don't use rodenticides indoors. If the rodent dies in

an unreachable area of your attic or wall, they cannot be removed.



**Ketchall (Live)
Mouse Trap**

For mice trapping indoors, a good trap is the Ketchall Mouse Trap. This trap is a repeating mouse trap that catches up to 15 mice in 1 setting. Upon entering the side of the Ketchall, the rodent steps on a trigger that causes a large door to revolve around and toss the mouse into the side chamber where the air holes are located. The mouse or mice depending on how many you catch can then be let go or disposed of. This type of mouse trap is recommended by PETA because it is a live trap. The Kechall trap is better for use around children and pets and should capture mice, field mice and smaller field rats and immature rats. The Ketchall will not catch large roof rats or Norway Rats.



Glue Boards

Glue Boards can also be used indoors to capture mice and rats. A glue board is a plastic pan of glue about 1/4" thick. When the rodent steps onto the glue trap it becomes lodged in the glue base unable to get away. Care should be taken to remove rats or mice that may still be alive but trapped on a glue board. Glue boards are inexpensive but have to be replaced with each catch. Glue boards are not recommended by PETA as it is thought glue board cause a cruel death to the rodent. What happens is that the rodent tries desperately to get loose from the glue board and as a result becomes covered in glue, usually suffocating. An opinion on glue boards is that they are a tool to control rodents and should be viewed as such. They are effective and are recommended over rodenticides indoors.

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SAFETY PRECAUTIONS FOR CLEAN-UP

When handling rodents, the following precautions should be followed to minimize disease transmission:

- Ventilate the affected area the night before clean-up by opening doors and windows.
- Use rubber gloves.
- Apply household disinfectants at maximum recommended concentrations to dead rodents, rodent droppings, nest and surrounding area, and allow for at least 15 minutes contact time before removal.
- Clean the affected area with paper towels or a mop. **DO NOT SWEEP OR VACUUM.** Double bag the disinfectant-soaked rodent and clean-up materials securely in plastic bags and seal.
- Before removing gloves, wash in disinfectant, then soap and water. Thoroughly wash hands with soap and water and dispose of gloves and clean-up materials with other household waste.