

Rodent Prevention

Common Rodent Pests

Roof Rat

Rattus rattus

This slender rat has a tail that is longer than the body. Mostly active at night, the roof rat harbors in ivy, dense vegetation and will readily enter buildings. An agile climber, this rat will travel along fences and power lines. Roof rats will eat fruit, nuts, pet food, and other residential sources of food. Roof rat droppings are pointed and about 1/2" long.

Norway Rat

Rattus norvegicus

Norway rats are typically found in creek banks, the shoreline and subterranean sewer systems. Slightly larger than the roof rat, the Norway rat's ears and eyes are smaller and the tail is shorter. This species will feed on garbage and other residential sources of food. Norway rat droppings have blunt ends and are about 3/4" long.

House Mouse

Mus musculus

Smaller overall, the house mouse averages 2 to 3 1/2 inches in length with the tail measuring 3 to 4 inches long. The average weight is 5/8 to 1 ounce. Typically found within houses, this species feeds on any accessible food. House mouse droppings are pointed and very small.

Signs of Rodent Activity

- Rub marks
- Live or dead rats or mice
- Rat or mouse droppings
- Runways or burrows
- Urine stains
- Tracks
- Rodent odors
- Rodent sounds

Rodent Control

Trapping rodents is the best method of control. It should be done after rodent proofing is completed. Trapping is especially desirable when rodenticides cannot be used near food, small children, or where domestic animals or livestock are present. Traps should be used indoors to prevent the serious odor and fly problems that can occur when poisoned rodents die in walls.

Commercially available rodenticides for rat control are EXTREMELY toxic to people and pets, and should be used with caution. If you do decide to use a rodenticide, always follow the manufacturer's label precautions and instructions. Always use rodenticides in child-proof bait stations and never use these products inside the house, attic, or basement.



Using Professional Services

The District can provide a free rodent inspection on your property, but cannot provide rodent control services to individual residents. If you choose to use a professional rodent control service, your pest control operator (PCO) should provide you with a thorough inspection and a written report containing:

- The kind of rodents present
- Harborage and food sources
- Rodent-proofing recommendations
- Proposed control methods

What Else Can You Do?

Chances are if you are having rodent problems, your neighbors are having problems too. An effective way to get rid of rats on your block is to work together with your neighbors.

As a group, you can make a commitment to make your neighborhood a place where rats are discouraged from establishing. Once you are organized to get rid of roof rats on your block, you will find the same organization can be useful for other block projects. A collaborative and cooperative approach works best.

If you would like to schedule a presentation or request additional brochures for your group, please contact the district laboratory at (650) 344-8592.



SAN MATEO COUNTY
MOSQUITO & VECTOR
CONTROL DISTRICT

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Environmental Management

Rats and mice will seek out environments where food, water and shelter are found. Preventing rodent problems depends on eliminating these attractants. To discourage rodents from visiting your property:

- Cover all garbage cans
- Harvest fruit as soon as it ripens, and pick up fallen fruit
- Don't leave birdseed on the ground
- Store wood and lumber at least 18 inches above the ground and 12 inches from walls or fences
- Never leave pet food out overnight, and store it in closed metal containers
- Keep all vegetation trimmed away from roofs, walls, fences, poles, and trees
- Keep rodents out of structures by sealing all openings larger than a nickel

San Mateo County Mosquito and Vector Control District

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Monday-Friday
8a.m. to 4:30p.m.

www.smcmvcd.org