

### Snap Traps or Poison

***If you are unsure hire a licensed and insured pest control professional.***

Place traps along walls with the trigger toward the wall. Bait traps with peanut butter, raisins, pieces of bacon, apple or potato, or fish/meat flavored cat food.

Poisons must be only used as stated on the label. Read the label and follow the directions carefully. Place poison bait in an enclosed bait station, in an area where rats or their dropping have been seen. (Bait stations can be made from 3" to 4" PVC piping and should be about 18" to 24" long.)

***Never touch a dead rat!*** Dead rats must be placed in a tight plastic bag and placed in a tight garbage can. Use gloves. Wash your hands with hot soap and water after getting rid of dead rats (even if you had worn gloves).

A gnawing edge is the edge of substances which rats can gnaw through. The gnawing edges must be protected with rodent-resistant materials.

Places to rodent-proof are:

- Edges of doors
- Windows
- Holes where pipes enter buildings
- Ventilation Holes in foundations
- Roof vents
- Exhaust fans
- Eave vents

Rodents can also enter homes through toilets.

- Seal openings that are larger than ½" in diameter (quarter size) for rats or ¼" in diameter (dime size) for mice and within 3 feet of the ground.
- Cover the bottoms and edges of doors with 24-gauge, or greater, sheet metal.
- Protect windows with ¼" 17 to 22-gauge hardware cloth.

- Rodent proof openings around pipes with sheet metal 26-gauge or heavier, perforated metal 24-gauge or heavier with openings no more than ¼" or concrete.

Inspect frequently for breaks during the first couple of weeks and promptly repair any breaks.

Many people have relied on cats and dogs to control rats, but in general cats and dogs are not good tools for control. Food put out for pets is excellent rat food. Most people put out more food than the pet can consume in one day. Rats then clean the bowl overnight. Because pets are well fed, they are too lazy to hunt.

Studies have shown that although predators can keep an area rat free, they can not remove an existing infestation.

- Birds of prey (hawks and owls) feed on large numbers of rodents.
- Barn owls are exceptional rat killers and a pair can be expected to kill several hundred rats a year.
- Non-poisonous snakes are very beneficial in rodent control. Do not kill non-poisonous snakes.



*Where Community and  
Commerce Meet*

# Rodent and Rat Control

City of Jeffersontown  
[www.jeffersontownky.gov](http://www.jeffersontownky.gov)

Department of Permitting  
and Enforcement  
(502) 267-8333

Have you seen a rat? Have you seen rat signs, such as tracts, burrows, gnaw marks, rub marks or droppings? Rats are secretive when people are around. Rats are most active at night, but will venture out in daylight to search for food or water. If you see one in the day, there is a good chance there are more. Rats and mice are active at night. Rats show greatest activity the first half of the night, if food is abundant. Rats and mice will be active during daytime hours when foods is scarce, when there is an over population of rats or when a poison has been used and the population is sick.

Rats can survive quite well on an ounce of decaying food or garbage per day along with an ounce of water. Frequently they range 100 to 150 feet from harborages in search of food or water.

Rats can squeeze through cracks ½” wide, can jump vertically 36”, horizontally 48”, and reach horizontally or vertically 15”.

Norway rats live about 1 year and reach sexual maturity in about 3 to 5 months. They can have 8 to 12 young per litter and up to 7 litters per year.

Burrows are shallow and complex, with several openings and average about 3” in diameter. Look for burrows:

- Along building walls
- Around outbuildings
- In dirt basements
- In embankments
- In hedgerows
- In garbage storage areas
- Under heavy brush
- Under concrete slabs
- Under rocks
- Under railroad ties
- Under firewood
- Under dog houses
- In bush growth

- In mulch piles
- In old cars
- In unused appliances and furniture stored outside
- In uncut weeds and grass

To avoid the potential for burrows:

- Take trash to the dump.
- Raise wood and rubbish piles off the ground.
- Remove all trash and debris.
- Stack woodpiles, lumber and household items at least 18” above the ground, 12” away from fences and walls.
- Trim trees, bushes and vines to at least 4 feet away from roofs.
- Remove heavy vegetation away from buildings and fences.
- Thin vegetation to allow daylight in and remove rat hiding places.

Rats teeth grow 4 ½” to 5 ½” per year and only gnawing keeps them short and sharp. Watch for:

- Stripped bark from plants.
- Piles of cut snail shells hidden under plants or pile of wood.
- Sounds in attic or walls.
- All signs of grey and ground squirrels too.

Fresh gnawing in wood is usually light-colored with sharp, splintery edges. Old gnawing is smooth and darker.

Rats like to move along walls, stairs or pipes and their fur appear as dark smears or rub marks.

- Runways - Rats habitually use the same paths or runways between harborage and food or water. Outside runways are paths 2”-3” wide and appear as smooth, hard packed trails under Vegetation. Indoors, runways are usually found along walls.

- Rub Marks - Along runways, dark greasy rub marks appear from contact with the rodent’s body. Rub marks on walls appear as black smudges left by the rodent. New rub marks are soft and will smudge. Old rub marks are brittle and will flake when scratched. Rafters may show swing marks of roof rats. To detect rodent activity, spread dust material like talcum powder along runways. Foot marks of rats (5-toe hind foot, 4-toe front foot) or tail drag marks will show in the powder.

Rat droppings are blunt ended, usually ¼” to ¾” long and black or grey in color.

Rat food sources include:

- Birdseed
- Dog dropping
- Garbage

To prevent access to these and other food sources:

- Store food in metal, rodent-proof containers at least 8” off the floor and 18” away from walls.
- Cover garbage cans tightly, store them at least 18: off the ground and 12” from walls and fences.
- Place bird feeders at least 4 feet high and remove any seed that falls on the ground.
- Feed pets only during daylight hours and remove any uneaten food immediately.
- Pick fruits and vegetables from gardens as they ripen.

Remember, rats are excellent climbers and jumpers!

#### Compost Piles

Unkept compost piles that are heavens for rats and rodents. Do not compost any animal products such as fish, meat, chicken, cheese or butter. Use only rodent resistant composters.