**How to Get Rid of Rodents**

**Step 1: Take Away Their Food.** Rodents will eat anything. You must get rid of their food to get rid of them. Common food sources include:
- Bird food/feeders
- Pet food/chicken feed
- Garbage
- Pet waste
- Unprotected compost
- Fallen fruit from trees or unharvested produce from gardens

**Step 2: Eliminate Them.** Trapping and poisoning are two effective ways to eliminate rodents.

**Trapping:** Trapping is the preferred method for eliminating rodents indoors and outdoors. Snap traps are inexpensive and effective. Peanut butter usually works as bait. Set the trap in the area with the most rodent activity. Rodents tend to run along walls, so place traps next to a wall, fenceline or foundation. Make sure children and pets do not have access to the traps.

**Poisoning:** Poisoning is not an ideal way to eliminate rodents, but is sometimes necessary. Poison is not recommended for indoor use, as rodents can die inside walls and produce odor. Rodent poisons (rodenticides) are also harmful to animals and pets, so use carefully. **Always use a secured bait station** to keep poisons away from children and pets.

**Step 3: Keep Them Out of Your House.** Small openings in homes, buildings and sheds must be sealed to prevent rodents from entering.
- Check for openings where pipes or wires enter the building, under eaves, and around foundations, doors and windows. Use cement, 1/4 inch steel hardware cloth (wire mesh-pictured), or steel wool and spray foam to seal openings.
- Crawl spaces and attics must be sealed to prevent rodent access.
- Rodents often enter through open doors, windows, or through pet doors. Install thresholds to prevent access under doors.

**Step 4: Keep Them Out of Your Yard.** Don't let your yard be a nesting zone for rodents. Rats will nest in:
- Outdoor piles of garbage and junk.
- Under wood piles or lumber. Stack wood piles 18 inches off the ground.
- Under blackberry bushes, shrubs, vines and tall grasses that are not trimmed or cut back.
- Holes under buildings that haven't been filled.

You may need to hire a professional if you have a bad infestation. Visit [http://www.ipmnet.org/Tim/Choose_Pest_Cont_Co.pdf](http://www.ipmnet.org/Tim/Choose_Pest_Cont_Co.pdf) for help choosing a pest control operator.

You can also call Multnomah County Vector Control at (503) 988-3464 or e-mail vector.nuisance@multco.us if you think you may have a rodent problem.

**Cleaning Up After an Infestation**

Follow these clean-up procedures to reduce your risk of exposure:

Note that these are recommendations provided by the CDC. Remember that bleach can stain surfaces and that cleaning chemicals can be harmful if misused. **ALWAYS follow labeled instructions.**

NEVER dry sweep or vacuum a rodent infested area. **ALWAYS use wet cleaning methods.**

**A 10 parts water to 1 part chlorine bleach solution** or a household disinfectant can be used to clean up contaminated areas.

Dispose of dead rodents by disinfecting first. Use gloves to pick up the rodent, place it in a bag and seal it. Place the bag within another bag and seal it. Put the bag in a covered outdoor trash can that is regularly emptied.

Wash your hands thoroughly with warm water, soap and dry with paper towels when you are done cleaning. Launder your clothes normally.
**Rodent Facts**

Rodents are a public health risk because they spread disease.

- **Rats eat everything!**
- **Rats climb, jump and swim.** If a squirrel can climb it, a rat can climb it.
- **Rats chew** through plastic, wood, soft metals, electrical wires (sometimes causing fires) and even cinder block and brick.
- **Rats squeeze into tiny spaces** and nest where it is dark and warm. They can produce a litter of pups (babies) every 3 to 4 weeks!

**What activities increase my risk of exposure to diseases carried by rodents?**

Entering or cleaning buildings that have been closed for a long period of time, such as hunting shacks, garages, storage sheds, or anywhere with rodent droppings. You can get sick by breathing in dust that is contaminated with urine or droppings, by direct contact with an infected rodent, or by eating or drinking products contaminated with urine or feces.

**How do you know if you have a rodent problem?**

Droppings are typically the easiest way to identify a rodent problem.

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**Contact Information**

If you live outside of Portland, there may be another local agency responsible for rodent control. Contact information for local municipalities is listed below for your convenience.

- **City of Fairview**
  Main Office
  (503) 665-7929

- **City of Gresham**
  Code Compliance Office
  (503) 618-2463

- **City of Wood Village**
  City Hall
  (503) 667-6211

- **City of Troutdale**
  Code Compliance Office
  (503) 491-4009

- **City of Maywood Park**
  Multnomah County Code Enforcement
  (Call this number for rodent questions within unincorporated Multnomah County)
  (503) 988-3464

*Some of the content in this pamphlet was adapted from Public Health- Seattle & King County Environmental Health Services*

- **Multnomah County Health Department**
  Vector Control
  5235 N. Columbia Blvd.
  Portland, OR 97203
  Phone: (503) 988-3464