

How do you know if you have a rat problem?

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

Mouse droppings are the size of a grain of rice and rat droppings are the size of an Ibuprofen capsule. Both are black in color.



Look for burrows or runways outside. Burrows are often hidden under vegetation, a wood pile, porch or deck.

Common types of rats

The two most common types of rats in our area are the Norway rat and the roof rat. The Norway rat is also sometimes called the brown rat, wharf rat or common rat. The roof rat is also called the black rat, fruit rat, house rat, ship rat or climbing rat.

- **Norway Rats** are slightly larger, more brown, and commonly nest closer to the ground.



- **Roof Rats** are smaller, darker (black) in color, and will usually nest in higher places.



Rat facts

Rats are a public health risk because they spread disease.

- **Rats climb, jump and swim.** If a squirrel can climb it, a rat can climb it.
- **Rats gnaw** through plastic, wood, soft metals, electrical wires (sometimes causing fires).
- **Rats can squeeze into tiny holes the size of a quarter** and nest where it is dark and warm.
- **Rats reproduce quickly.** They can have a litter of pups (babies) every 21 days.



You may need to hire a professional if you have a bad infestation.

Visit [epa.gov/sites/default/files/2015-10/documents/pest-control-company.pdf](https://www.epa.gov/sites/default/files/2015-10/documents/pest-control-company.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 rat problem.

Please call **(503) 988-3464**, scan the code, or visit our website multco.us/health/rats for more information.



Multnomah County Vector Control & Code Enforcement
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Multnomah County Vector Control
& Code Enforcement

Rat Prevention and Control



Cleaning up after an infestation

Use caution when entering or cleaning a building.

Disinfect anything you think rats have touched before you touch it.

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 rat infested area. ALWAYS use wet cleaning methods.

ALWAYS wear rubber gloves, long sleeves, protective eye-wear and a dust mask when cleaning. This will help protect you from contamination, and from coming in contact with potentially harmful chemicals.

A **9 parts water to 1 part chlorine bleach solution** or a household disinfectant can be used to clean up contaminated areas.

Dispose of dead rats by disinfecting first. Use a tool to pick up the rat, 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.



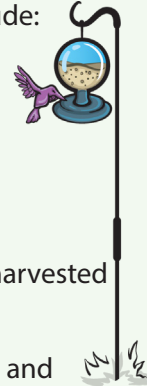
Wash your hands thoroughly with warm water, soap and dry with paper towels when you are done cleaning. Launder your clothes normally.



How to get rid of rats

Step 1: Take away their food. You must secure or remove their food to get rid of them. Common food sources include:

- Bird food/feeders
- Pet food/chicken feed
- Squirrel food
- Garbage
- Pet waste
- Unprotected compost
- Seasonal fruit from trees or unharvested produce from gardens



Step 2: Eliminate them. Trapping and poisoning are two effective ways to eliminate rats.

Trapping is the preferred method for eliminating rats indoors and outdoors.

Covered snap traps

(pictured) are effective and we offer up to three for free. Peanut butter usually works as bait.

Set the trap in the area with the most rat activity. Rats tend to run along walls, so place traps next to a wall, fence-line or foundation. Make sure children and pets do not have access to the traps.

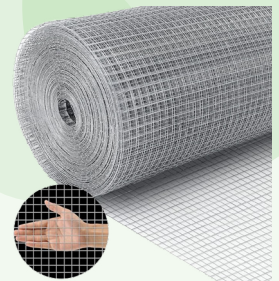


Poisoning is not an ideal way to eliminate rats, but is sometimes necessary. Poison is not recommended until home is secured, as rats can die inside walls and produce odor. Rat poisons (rodenticides) are also harmful to animals and pets, so use carefully. **Always use a secured bait station** to keep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

Step 3: Keep them out of your house.

Openings in homes, buildings and sheds must be sealed to prevent rats from entering.

- Check for openings where pipes or wires enter the building, under eaves, and crawl space vents 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 rat access.
- 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 rats. 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.

Vector Control and Code Enforcement protects health and enhances livability. We serve as a resource to address public health vector issues through education. Programs include:

- Rodent Control
- Mosquito Control
- Code Enforcement of some specific county and city municipal codes