



Rat Control: How to look for, prevent & respond!

Rats can be carriers of disease and can cause damage to your property. As rat sightings across the GTA become more common, learn how to prevent and control them on your property!

Prevention



Make your home less appealing to rodents



Get rid of easy entry points

- rats can enter your home through a hole the size of a quarter!

Patch cracks in foundations, stuff steel wool around pipes before caulking or plastering, and cover vents and soffits with fine mesh metal screening



Remove anything that could create a comfortable nesting site or hiding spot (i.e. wood piles, old tires, unused clutter)

Cut tall grass and weeds, avoid dense planting, and keep bushes and shrubs away from your foundation



Secure garbage and composters in rodent-proof containers with tight-fitting lids

Raise woodpiles about 30 centimetres (1 foot) off the ground, and place them away from your house



Eliminate water sources (like leaky taps, sweating pipes, and open drains)

Eliminate sources of food (fallen fruit, pet food left outdoors, grass or bird seed, etc.)



How do I know if I have rats?

Anyone can inspect for rats. Rats come out at night, so walk around your property with a flashlight after dark. This will help you see where rats are going, so you can check for burrows and entry points during the daytime.

- Look for places where rats live (nests or burrows).
- Look for holes in dirt or concrete ranging from 1-4 inches.
- Look for droppings, typically found close to garbage. If they're moist and dark, it's a sign that rats are in the area.
- Look for holes and gnaw marks on wood





What should I do if I have rats on my property?

There are several types of traps that can be used to control rats.

Snap traps and electronic traps are easy to use and very effective if well positioned and set properly. They generally kill rats instantly. Live traps have trap doors that are triggered when rats walk over them. Follow the manufacturer's directions on how to use a particular trap.

Ultrasonic devices can also be used; they give off sound waves or vibrations that rats dislike. However, rats may adapt to the devices and return. It is recommended that ultrasonic devices be used along with other pest control options.

Baits or poisons can also be used to control rats, but are best used alongside other management strategies including rat-proofing and good sanitation. If using poison baits, they must be used with a tamper-proof bait station in areas accessible to children and pets. Read the product label and follow the label directions and safety precautions closely. Anticoagulant rodenticides are available to the general public. Commercial class products must be applied by a certified professional.



Cleaning up after rats



Use caution when near urine and droppings, wear rubber gloves and a dust mask during cleanup.



Wear gloves to dispose of dead rats, and double bag them in plastic bags.



Never sweep or vacuum dry droppings. The dust that is raised can cause illness.



Dampen droppings and debris with a solution of bleach and water before wiping up.



Wash hands and exposed clothing thoroughly after clean-up, and separate from other laundry.

This information sheet was developed using information from Health Canada and various Ontario Public Health Units. For more information, contact the Town of Ajax at 905-619-2529 or the Durham Region Health Department at 1-800-841-2729.