

Rat Facts

Information



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General Information

Rats can transmit serious diseases such as dysentery, leptospirosis and typhus fever.

Health risk

Rats pose a significant health risk to the community. Not only do they spread serious diseases, rat hair and faeces can cause food poisoning if it comes into contact with food or utensils. Their fleas, lice and ticks can also harm pets and humans. Rat colonies are destructive, often gnawing through building pipes, conduits and wiring.

The law

It is a legal requirement that owners and occupiers of premises prevent rats from living and breeding on their property.

Rat indicators

Rats are only seen during the day if they are very hungry or present in large numbers. Commonly, the presence of rats is indicated by:

- Droppings (12mm to 18mm long);
- Debris left in dark corners (e.g. almond shells, chop bones, etc.);
- Partially eaten fruit and vegetables;
- Greasy rub marks;
- Burrow holes around buildings;
- Pets being more excitable than usual;
- Squeaking, gnawing or movement noises in the walls, cupboards, ceiling or under-floor areas.

Avoiding rat problems

Deny rats food and shelter by:

- Storing firewood away from sheds or fences and at least 40cm above the ground;
- Keep the shed and yard clear of junk piles;
- Removing all fruit and nuts from trees and vines at the end of the season;
- Identifying and blocking all potential entry points to buildings such as pipes and service entries;
- Ensuring pet food dishes and bulk supplies are stored in a manner that makes them inaccessible by rats;
- Ensuring rubbish and compost bins prevent rats access. Never compost meat;
- Maintaining a tidy yard.

Destruction of rats

Chemical baits are the most effective way of destroying rats. Many brands and sizes are available at hardware stores and supermarkets. It is important to read the manufacturer's instructions carefully and check bait regularly to ensure they are not accessible to children or pets and to see if rats have been eating them.

The old-fashioned spring 'back break' trap is still the best trap for home use. Trap baits can include bacon, fish, nuts, peanut butter or apple.

Need more Information?

City of Marion

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