



RESIDENTIAL ENVIRONMENTAL
HEALTH

PEST CONTROL

RATS AND MICE

RATS

Two types of rat are found in the UK: the ship or black rat and the brown (common or sewer) rat. The black rat is very rare in the UK and is not described further in this leaflet.

The brown rat can be found anywhere that humans are. In the wild they live for up to 14 months and can breed 7 times in their lifetime. With an average litter of 7-8 young, a pair of rats may produce up to 800 young in one year.

Size: 19-28cm head and body length, the tail is approximately half the body length.

Colour: the brown rat varies in coat colour from grey-brown to almost black with lighter undersides.

Their front teeth continuously grow and they need to gnaw frequently on hard surfaces to keep their teeth to a useful length. Accordingly rats can cause immense damage in the home, due to gnawing items such as plastic/lead pipes, brickwork, electrical cables and wood.

Rats can also carry diseases such as Salmonella food poisoning and Weil's disease (leptospirosis) which they spread from their urine, faeces and from their bodies.

Their favourite food is cereal although they will eat almost anything that humans eat. Rats are mainly active at night but are commonly seen during the day, especially if they have regular access to food e.g. from a bird table or from rubbish not properly disposed of.

MICE

Mice will also be found anywhere humans are. Reproduction rates can be in the region of 2000 young in one year from a pair of adults. Each female can have up to 10 litters of 5-6 young each year, with the babies themselves able to breed at 8-12 weeks of age. Life expectancy is around one year.

Size: 10cm head and body length, the tail is approximately three quarters of the body length.

Colour: as with rats, the coat colour can vary from grey-brown to very dark brown with lighter undersides.

Mice can also contaminate large amounts of food or materials with their droppings, urine and bodies. As for rats they can cause food poisoning and extensive damage from gnawing

Mice are also excellent climbers and can gain access to property through very small gaps. If a pencil can fit through a hole, so can a mouse

WHAT TO LOOK FOR

The following signs may indicate an infestation is present:

- Damage caused by gnawing.
- Droppings or smell of urine.
- Noises from the loft or wall cavities.
- Nesting material e.g. shredded paper.

- Grease smears along walls and skirting boards.
- Holes in structure.
- 'Tracking'-flattened grass or earth where rats and mice have created their own pathway.
- Digging/disturbance in compost bins.
- Sightings of live rats or mice

HOW TO DETER RATS AND MICE

It is possible to help to prevent a rat or mouse infestation by some simple measures.

- Remove all potential food sources. Clean up any rubbish and ensure bin lids are closed. If animal feed is stored outside or in sheds/garages keep it in sealed pest proof containers. Remove food from animals overnight.
- One cause of rodent infestation is excessive bird feeding. Only put out enough food that the birds can eat in a day and clear up any spillages. Rats will also use bird baths as a water source.
- If you have a compost bin, placing it on paving slabs or wire mesh will prevent rats from tunnelling inwards. It is also possible to purchase bases specially made for compost bins. Do not put meat onto compost heaps.
- Keep yards and gardens tidy and cut back overgrown areas. Remove piles of wood

and leaves that could provide harbourage. Keep sheds and garages in good repair to prevent access to rodents.

- Ensure drainpipes and drain inspection covers are in good condition. Proper maintenance to prevent water leaks, outside taps for example is important.
- Seal gaps around pipe work entering your property. Use wire wool or similar that rodents cannot gnaw through.

TREATMENT

Our experienced pest control operators will be able to locate where rodents are living or gaining entry to your property and advise and/or treat accordingly. Rats and mice are adaptable, highly mobile and breed rapidly. This combination makes it a difficult task to treat privately, hence is always best left to the professional pest control operator.

If you do attempt your own treatment, always read and follow all instructions fully when using poisons or traps. Please be aware the poisons available to householders are not as effective as those used by competent, trained pest control operators.

Hart District Council offers a professional service for the treatment of rats and mice in domestic premises. All officers are fully trained and qualified with many years experience. Working practices comply with current health and safety legislation and minimise any risk of damage to the environment. All treatments are humane.

For more information or to book an appointment for our pest control officer to visit please call **01252 774420**.

We aim to respond the same or next day whenever possible.

Prices (2009/10) Rats and Mice

Rats and mice Per treatment (up to 4 visits) Domestic premises	£60
As above where the householder is on a means tested benefit	FREE

**Call Hart DC Pest Control Services
directly on 01252 774420**

Hart District Council
Civic Offices
Harlington Way
Fleet
Hants
GU51 4AE
Tel: 01252 622122
Fax: 01252 626886
www.hart.gov.uk