

## **Basics About Pest Control**

Pests such as rats and mice are, unfortunately, a common sight in New England, especially around more heavily wooded areas. These pests can enter the home, increasing risk of disease, damaging electrical wires and insulation, and otherwise be a general nuisance. As we get closer to the summer months and outdoor rodent activity might increase, there are some things residents can do to help decrease rodent and pest activity in their homes and backyards.

### **Traps**

Setting up common snap traps inside your home is a cheap and effective way of controlling an existing rodent population.

- Make sure to always read instructions for traps
- Remember: traps for mice might not work for catching rats or vice versa. Make sure you set up the right traps for the right kind of rodent
- Set up traps along walls in a “T” position, so that the bait of the trap is facing the wall. Rodents don’t like to be out in the open and tend to run along walls

### **Seal Up**

Even if you trap and reduce the rodent population in or around your home, so long as they have a means of entry, rodents can come back. Therefore, you should make an effort to find and seal any holes leading into your property. Follow the instructions on the CDC website for sealing holes listed below, as well as ideal places to find holes.

[https://www.cdc.gov/rodents/prevent\\_infestations/seal\\_up.html](https://www.cdc.gov/rodents/prevent_infestations/seal_up.html)

### **Reduce Sources of Food**

Especially outdoors, certain innocuous sources of food can draw rodents in and bring them back even if you’ve controlled the population before. To help reduce draws for rodents, you can do the following:

- Make sure you put out trash only in durable hard-plastic or metal bins
- Store animal feed (for chickens or pets) in durable, rodent-proof containers (hard plastic or metal)
- Put squirrel-guards or other rodent deterring material around bird feeders, or remove bird feeders entirely
- Make sure your lawns are well mowed and tended, as overgrowth can make it easier for rodents to hide
- Keep areas near grills and outdoor cooking spaces clean from spilled food
- Pick up after your pets! Pet feces can attract rodents

Remember that in all cases, it’s best to contact a licensed pest control operator to assess your home and help you control a rodent population. Mice tend not to range far from their burrows, but rats can range quite a distance. A rat problem in one home may indicate that the issue is street-wide. If you notice rats, talk to your neighbors and try and coordinate pest management plans to make sure the problem is dealt with. Talk to your neighbors about mitigating sources of food or pest harborage, like removing debris from their front lawns, making sure trash is properly kept in rodent-proof bins, and animal feed (if applicable) is properly stored.