

City of New Orleans Mosquito & Termite Control Board

Rodent Control and Prevention after Hurricane Katrina – Guidelines for Property Owners and Tenants



CITY OF NEW ORLEANS

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Rodents After a Natural Disaster

After a natural disaster, populations of rats and mice often decrease sharply due to drowning, starvation, or disease. Survivors are often displaced and enter new areas in search of shelter, food, and water. Once rodents find shelter and food, they begin to reproduce and the population grows. If conditions are favorable, rodent populations can rebound 6 to 10 months after the disaster.

Common Rodent Pests

Scientists call urban rats and mice “commensal” rodents, because they “feed at the same table” with people. Most cities are infested with populations of these destructive pests that contaminate food with their droppings and urine, damage property and cause fires by gnawing, and spread disease. The three most common rodent pests in New Orleans are the house mouse (*Mus musculus*), the Norway rat (*Rattus norvegicus*), and the roof rat (*Rattus rattus*).



Sanitation is the first step to rodent control!

Every effort should be made to eliminate available food and shelter in and around your property.

Prevention Inside the Home

- Rats can enter through a ½ inch opening and a house mouse through a ¼ inch opening. Close large openings with sheet metal and fill smaller openings with wads of chicken wire, coarse steel wool, coarse copper mesh or concrete.
- Repair screens on window and doors and keep outside doors closed in order to prevent rodents from entering. Install tight-fitting metal sweeps at the bottom of exterior doors.
- Take garbage and trash out daily. Do not leave garbage in your home overnight. Keep garbage and food waste in metal or thick plastic containers.
- Remove left over food and keep cooking areas clean at all times.
- Store pet food in rodent-proof containers. Do not leave food in pet dishes overnight.
- Do not let water sit overnight in sinks or pet bowls. Repair leaky faucets and keep toilet lids closed.
- Remove clutter. Boxes, papers, and piles of old clothes can provide nesting areas for rodents.



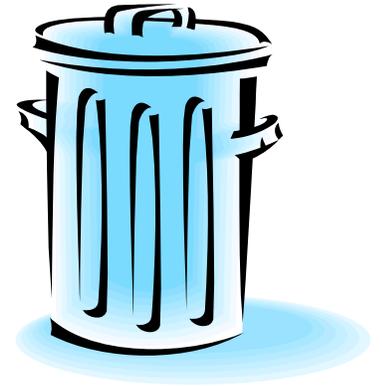
Prevention Outside the Home

- Have garbage and trash picked up at least weekly. Dispose of garbage and trash in heavy-duty plastic containers or in rust-resistant containers with tight-fitting lids.
- Do not allow water to puddle around buildings or air conditioning units. Keep gutter, downspouts and drains free of debris. Repair leaky faucets and nozzles.
- Store pet food in rodent-proof containers. Do not leave excess pet food out overnight. Keep pet living areas clean and free of debris.
- Keep your lawn and other landscape trimmed so that the vegetation does not become a hiding place for rodents. Trim trees regularly so that limbs do not touch your home.
- Choose plants and trees for your yard that do not produce large amounts of fruit and seeds. Pick fruit and vegetables as they ripen. Dispose of fallen fruit, seeds, and vegetables regularly.



8 Tips for Rodent Control

1. Store garbage and trash in metal or heavy plastic containers with a tight fitting lid.
2. Exclude rodents from entering your home by closing all entry points. Close holes using concrete.
3. Keep pet food stored in rodent-proof containers. After feeding your pet, remove the excess pet food. Never leave pet food out overnight.
4. Do not feed birds and other wildlife. Feeding the wildlife also feeds rats and mice.
5. Rats and mice need water to survive. Repair all leaks inside and outside your home and prevent water from accumulating on your property.
6. Do not create nesting areas for rodents. Keep your landscape and lawn trimmed.
7. Do not provide hiding places for rodents. Remove clutter inside and outside the home. Remove unwanted items inside and outside the home. Remove unwanted items from the yard and store items such as lumber on racks off the ground and away from fences and walls.
8. Inspect your property regularly for signs of rodents such as droppings, gnawing, or burrows.



For more information or to report a rodent
complaint please contact:
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