



**Housing  
& Community  
Environment  
Program**

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# The Resident's Guide To Rodent Control



**To The Residents:**

This booklet is designed to assist you in the control of rats and the environmental conditions that breed rats.

We sincerely hope that after you have read this booklet you will have a better understanding of what you can do in your home and yard to have a rat-free community.



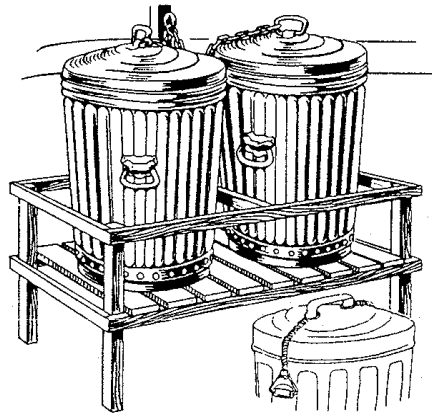
Rats require the same three things as humans need to survive: food, water, and shelter. Without these things, rats cannot exist.

The following information will assist you in eliminating rats and the conditions which attract rats to your yard and into your home.

Eighty percent of the rat's diet is garbage. People who are careless with their garbage will attract and feed rats. The Health Department considers the following steps to be good garbage storage practices;

- İ Drain the moisture out of your garbage before storing it in plastic bags. This reduces odors, the breeding of flies and limits spills during handling and removal.
- Í The kitchen garbage can should have a lid and a plastic liner. In addition to the usually small can kept in the kitchen, have at least one 30-35 gallon container with a tight lid for every two people living there for garbage storage.

- Î Plastic bags of garbage awaiting pick up must not be left outside, on a porch or in the garage, overnight. Rats are most active at night. You may not notice the small holes they chew in the bags until it is too late. Whenever rats find a steady source of food, they move in, so only store garbage in sturdy cans with a lid.



- Ï Clean up the garbage storage area after each collection and occasionally wash your cans out.

If these four steps are followed, you should eliminate 80 percent of the rat's food.

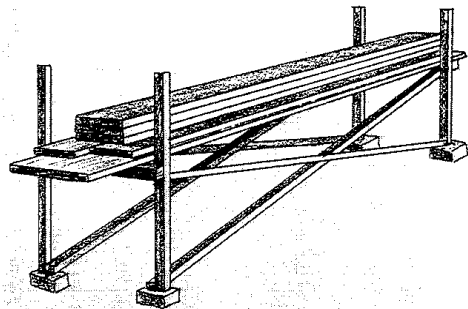
In the Pittsburgh area, we have found that the rest of a rat's diet comes from the following sources;



- İ Dog Food. Pet food should not sit out for long periods of time. Make it a habit to pick up pet food containers within an hour after feeding time. This practice will eliminate a major source of rat food. Also, clean up your pet's waste daily.
- Í Bird seed. If you feed birds, use a birdfeeder and clean up under the feeder weekly. Do not throw bread or feed on the ground. That is a violation of local anti-litter laws and the County Health Regulations. If rats are around stop feeding the birds until the rat problem is solved.
- Î In the house, store all grain products, such as rice, cereals, pasta, etc. in glass or metal containers. Pet foods and bird seed should be stored in metal garbage cans with a tight lid.

- Keep potatoes and onions in the refrigerator or in metal or glass containers; When rodents are around, you can not store food in wooden cabinets or on the floor. Do not leave dirty dishes in the sink overnight.

The Norway Rat is a burrowing animal that lives mostly in the ground. We cannot stop them from living there, but we can stop providing them with nesting materials and hiding places.

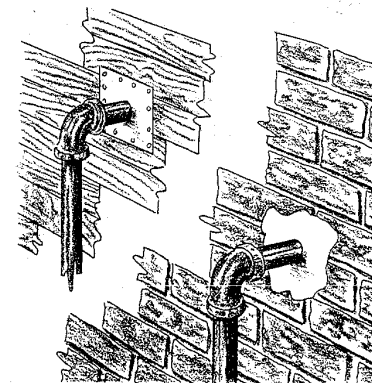


- Keep all lumber and building materials in your yard at least 12 -18" up off the ground. If you don't plan to use it again, have it removed.
- Old household items, such as chairs, sofas, refrigerators, etc., should be removed from your yard as soon as they have been discarded.
- Old cars should not be left on your property for an extended amount of time.
- Cellars and attics should not have an accumulation of items that you may never use again. If you don't use it, discard it.

Water is the only thing that rats need, but that humans are unable to control. Creeks, rain, and sewers prevent us from eliminating his water supply. So you must work extra hard at eliminating the food and harborage, because he cannot live on water alone.

## HOW TO KEEP RATS OUT OF YOUR HOME

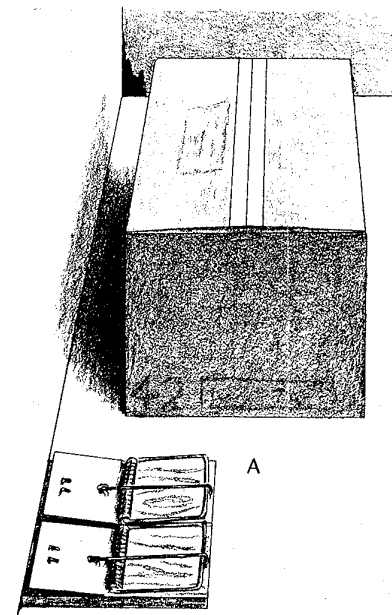
- Close all holes in the floor and in wooden baseboards with metal strips. Plug holes in the walls with plaster and cement, especially near water and gas lines and sewer pipes.
- Doors should close tightly. Rats can enter openings of ½ inch or more. A new metal sweep installed on the bottom of your door will exclude rats as well as cold drafts.
- Basement windows should fit tightly and should have no broken glass.
- All holes in exterior walls and foundations should be closed with metal patches or filled with cement.



## THE TWO BEST METHODS OF KILLING RATS ARE POISON BAITS AND TRAPS

### TRAPS

The regular wooden spring board trap (snap trap) is still a very effective way to catch rats. They can be purchased in any hardware store and they allow you to dispose of the rat's carcass before an odor problem develops. But rats will avoid any new object that you set in their environment. After a few days, though,



the rat will cautiously investigate the trap and may even set it off accidentally, without getting caught. For this reason, baited but un-set traps will help overcome the rat's fear of them. You will also want to put a small piece of hot dog, bacon, cereal grain or fruit on the trigger. Peanut butter, bread, pet food or any other item that the rat has been eating, will also attract them. Stale baits are not effective. After the rat has been taking the bait regularly, reduce the amount of bait and set the trigger. Sticky glue boards are also effective on rats, but only if they are fastened to the floor. Traps and glue boards must be placed along a wall where you know the rat frequents. A box or board may be positioned against the wall to help guide the rat toward the trap.

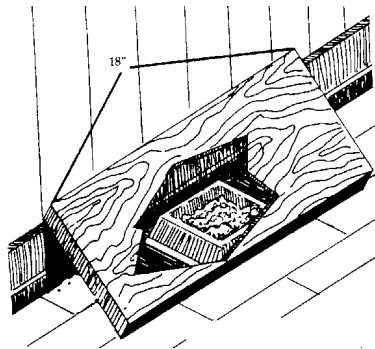
For additional tips on trapping rats, call the Health Department.

## POISON

One of the safest poisons you can buy for killing rats is one with an anticoagulant toxicant as the active ingredient. Because of the small quantities normally used, rat baits are relatively safe around adults but they are very poisonous to pets and small children. You should always be extra careful when handling rat baits and to read the label carefully and completely.

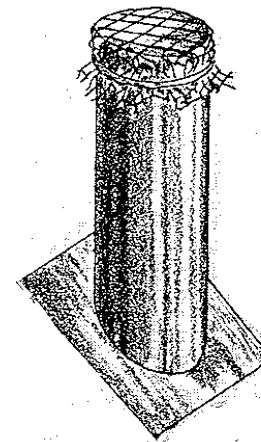
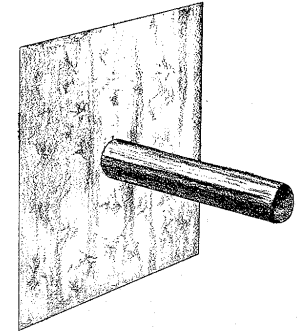
## PLACEMENT OF POISONS

Rat poison should never be placed out in the open where pets and children can get at it. Always place it directly in the rat hole, or behind a board leaning against a wall, or under something in the area where the rat frequents. Most of our rat baits do not kill the rat with a single feeding. So make sure when using these poisons that you check daily to see if the rat is feeding on the bait. Once they start taking it, keep supplying fresh bait until they no longer take it. Again, the label on the rat bait is an excellent source of information about using that product. For more tips on baiting rats, call the Health Department.



## MATERIALS TO USE WHEN RODENT PROOFING YOUR HOME

- ì Sheet metal is ideal for closing openings in wood and broken cellar windows.
- í Concrete or mortar should be used when sealing breaks in the foundation or exterior wall.
- î Wire mesh is good for covering pipes that must remain open such as vent pipes, etc.



IF THE  
PAMPHLET  
RAT  
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STILL HAVE  
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SUCH AS A NEIGHBOR, A VACANT HOUSE OR A BROKEN  
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IDEAS IN THIS  
ARE FOLLOWED, YOUR  
PROBLEM SHOULD  
OVER. BUT IF YOU  
RATS, THERE MAY BE  
SOURCE IN THE AREA,

FOR ADDITIONAL INFORMATION AND/OR DIRECT ASSISTANCE WITH A RAT PROBLEM, EITHER CALL THE HOUSING & COMMUNITY ENVIRONMENT PROGRAM, AT (412) 350-4046, OR YOUR LOCAL MUNICIPAL GOVERNMENT OFFICE.