

## **Pest Control**

### **Guidelines to prevent and control rats or mice in the home**



**This advice is aimed at domestic properties. If you are a business, especially a food premises, we recommend that you obtain professional advice which can be tailored to your premises' requirements.**

Rats and mice are rarely welcome visitors to our homes or gardens, but the cost of pest control services to deal with an infestation can make some people wary. These guidelines will show you ways to prevent or reduce a rats or mice in your home.



If you have seen evidence of rats or mice, it is important for you to deal with it. You may need to talk to your neighbours in case they need to get a treatment.

#### **Home Treatment/Extermination:**

It is possible to buy rodent traps and poisons, both from retail stores and online, to help you deal with an infestation. Make sure to always follow the instructions carefully.

#### Traps

- Spring-loaded bar trap: The most common type of trap, when the animal takes the bait from the trap the spring-loaded bar will swing down rapidly catching it.
- Humane traps: To those who do not like the idea of killing the pests, humane traps exist which will capture the animal alive. If using this method it is important to release the animal a good distance away so that they will not return. It is not encouraged that these are used as it may transfer the problem elsewhere.

#### Poisons

Due to the feeding habits and their role as scavengers, poisons must be slow-acting to ensure they are effective. Most poisons will take one to two weeks to take action. Poisons should be placed out of the way and putting it in a special bait box or something like an old piece of drainage pipe may encourage them to take the bait. Rats/mice are cautious animals and it may be a few days before they eat any poison.

#### **Discouraging Rats/Mice:**

They must have adequate food and shelter in order to live and thrive. Removal of these two factors is the best way to prevent and control pest problems.

#### **Outdoor Areas:**

##### Food

- Dispose of all waste (especially food waste) promptly and appropriately. Store food waste in sealed containers such as your wheelie bin.
- Do not put out seeds, nuts or food scraps for birds when you have a rat infestation. Nuts may stop any poisons you have put out working properly.

##### Shelter

- Properly maintain landscaping – trim any overgrown vegetation and shrubbery until ground underneath is visible.
- Remove any debris – rock piles, old equipment, mattresses, old garden waste etc.
- Store firewood away from the house.
- Rats/mice can be attracted to the warm and undisturbed environment that a compost heap provides. By regularly disturbing the contents, they are discouraged from taking up residence and it helps produce a better quality compost. You can also spread a piece of chicken wire across the soil under the compost bin. The netting should extend at least 16 cm beyond the bin on all sides. With some compost bins, you can purchase a plastic base which sits on the soil with the compost bin on the top. This allows drainage and access to beneficial worms and soil insects, whilst at the same time, denying access.

### **Indoor Areas:**

#### Food

- Clean areas under stoves, refrigerators and dishwashers. Remove any food debris.
- Keep counter tops clear of food, especially over night.
- Store dry food, pet food and birdseed in sealed containers.
- Clean pet bowls at night.

#### Shelter

- Keep storage areas free of clutter.
- Rodent-Proof hard-to-access areas that tend to be neglected.

### **Exclusion:**

Proofing your home whenever possible is a critical step in controlling rats or mice. You can control them by making it impossible for them to gain entry to your home. They can get through gaps as small as ¼ inch/6mm.

### **How AVDC can help:**

AVDC do offer a pest control service through a contractor. Our current charge is £57.50 per household for a minimum of two visits. Treatments are provided free of charge to residents who claim housing benefit, council tax benefit or income support.

There are other private companies who provide pest control services. Prior to agreeing for a contractor to do a treatment it is important to get a quote and confirm what is included.

If there is a severe infestation officers from environmental health can visit and if required serve legal notices requiring that works are undertaken to control the rodents. In most cases we would prefer that you have tried to resolve matters prior to our involvement.

### **For further information or to book a treatment please contact:**

Environmental Health and Licensing  
 Aylesbury Vale District Council  
 66 High Street, Aylesbury, Bucks HP20 1SD  
 Email – [Envhealth@aylesburyvalcdc.gov.uk](mailto:Envhealth@aylesburyvalcdc.gov.uk)  
 Tel – 01296 585605  
 Fax – 01296 585674