

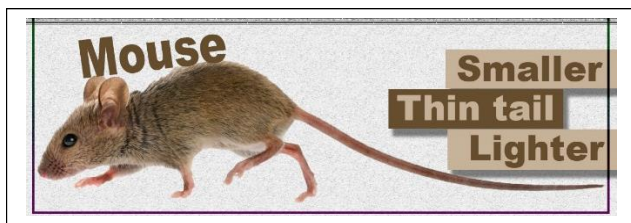


Fact Sheet: Rats and Mice



Rats and mice are a part of the natural environment, however issues arise when favourable conditions are provided that may result in an extraordinary population of these species and/or the presence of such in areas where they may come into contact with humans.

Rats and mice (rodents) pose a public health risk, with the potential to transmit diseases to humans. The most common disease transmitted by rats and mice is Salmonellosis resulting from the consumption of food contaminated by excreta or saliva of rodents.



In addition to causing illness in humans, rodents can be very destructive to your property. Rodents may cause food spoilage and contamination, physical damage through gnawing on structures and furniture, and may also be responsible for house fires resulting from damage to electrical wiring.

How do I determine if I have rats and mice at my property?

The presence of rats and mice at your property can be determined by the following signs:

- damage to food packaging (cardboard boxes or food cartons torn apart or gnawed);
- missing food, gnaw marks or burrows;



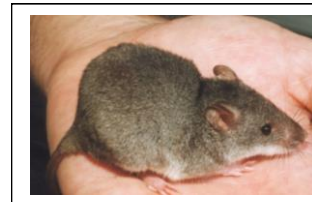
- the presence of droppings, often under and behind electrical appliances (i.e. dishwashers, refrigerators, washing machines) and items of furniture that are rarely disturbed, as well as within crevices of soft furnishing such as couches and bedding;
- sounds in the ceiling or wall cavities during the night;
- visible rat trails/runs (the presence of brown marks on walls, pipes and floor beams from rats rubbing up against these surfaces, leaving an oily residue from their fur).

The Law

It is important to note that not all rats and mice are considered pests, with several native species present in Australia, including the Water Mouse, Bush Rat and Water Rat (pictured below).

Prior to taking any control measures, it is imperative that you identify the species of rodent present, as native species **are protected** under the *Nature Conservation Act 1992*. For further information to assist you in identifying rodent species, please refer to the Department of Environment and Science website: <https://environment.des.qld.gov.au/wildlife/animals-az/>.

Water Mouse



Bush Rat



Water Rat



Where you have determined that the rodent species present at your property is indeed a pest species, you are required to take any and all appropriate actions to eradicate the population and remove or reduce the public health risk. Under the *Public Health Regulation 2018*, it is an offence to allow structures or the surrounding land on your property to provide a breeding ground or place of harbourage for rats and mice. Failure to take all reasonable and practicable measures may result in enforcement action being initiated against the responsible person.

What measures can I take to control rats and mice at my property?

To protect the health of you and your family and ensure compliance with your legislative obligations under the *Public Health Regulation 2018*, the following actions should be taken:

- Remove all potential food sources by ensuring lids to bins are kept closed, food wastes are only disposed of in a general waste bin or suitably designed compost bin, doors to food storage areas are kept closed, food (including pet food) is stored in pest-proof containers with tight fitting lids, birds and poultry are fed daily and any spent feed cleaned up frequently, and no food in open containers is left out for pets overnight.
- Remove all potential water sources where possible (it is generally understood that this is not possible if you have domestic animals (cats or dogs) requiring drinking water).
- Maintain vegetation by keeping grass cut short and ensuring all trees and shrubs surrounding the house and/or other

structures are kept trimmed to prevent rodents using these to gain access to said structures.

- Stack any timber, boxes or other materials at least 30cm above the ground and 30cm away from walls or other hard surfaces to prevent rodents harbouring under or behind them.
- Secure structures against the entry of pests by sealing or covering any holes or gaps, sealing roof cavities, ensuring downpipes are tightly connected to stormwater infrastructure, and fitting covers to any disused and disconnected pipes.
- Prevent the accumulation of matter around the property that may provide places for harbourage or breeding, including dis-used furniture (in particular, soft furnishings such as mattresses and couches) and green waste, by disposing of discarded items/waste in an appropriate manner on a regular basis.

How do I control rats and mice at my property?

If you have determined the presence of rats and/or mice at your property, you should contact a licensed Pest Management Technician for advice and treatment.

Alternatively, you may purchase bait or traps from a hardware, produce or supermarket store. You must comply with the directions on the product label at all times and only use the product for its intended purpose. Council does not supply rat bait or traps to residents.

Once your property is free from rodents, you should ensure the above control measures are implemented to reduce the likelihood of a re-infestation.

What if rats and mice are breeding at another property?

Should you have concerns that a property provides for the breeding and harbourage of rats and mice, you may wish to have a talk with your neighbour and bring this to their attention for remediation.

If you require further information or wish to discuss this matter, please contact the Environmental Health Section on 1300 794 929.

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