

RATS AND MICE

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INTRODUCTION

This information sheet outlines facts on the most asked questions to do with pest rodents and their management.

WHY ARE RODENTS A CONCERN?

The presence of rats and mice in buildings is generally undesirable because of potential for food spoilage, contamination, physical damage of structures and transmission of disease to humans and livestock.

WHAT PEST RODENTS ARE THERE IN THE CITY OF KARRATHA?

The pest rodents that are most commonly encountered within the City are the introduced species namely the Norway Rat (*Rattus norvegicus*), the Black Rat (*Rattus rattus*) and the House Mouse (*Mus musculus*). These rodents have different characteristics.

WHO IS RESPONSIBLE FOR THE MANAGEMENT OF RATS AND MICE?

Rats and mice can multiply prolifically under favourable environmental conditions and can be very difficult to remove. The owner or occupier of a premises is responsible for the management of vermin on their property. Local Health Laws and food hygiene regulations for commercial food businesses require owners or occupiers to take effective measures to discourage rats and mice.

WHAT ARE THE SIGNS OF THE PRESENCE OF RATS AND MICE?

Rats and mice are seldom seen during the day unless there is an infestation. If you see activity during the day, it is generally indicative of a severe problem. Rodents are usually shy and nocturnal. Signs of the presence of the rodents include:

- Presence of droppings in cupboards, under appliances and near entry holes
- Accumulations of waste food such as berries, snail shells and crumbs
- Knocking or bumping, squeaking, burrowing and gnawing noises. Often heard from the roof at night.
- A musty odour for long-term infestations.
- Presence of burrows, nests and boltholes.
- Evidence of gnawing, which can include chewed woodwork, plastics and even soft metals.
- Excitement of pets.

HOW DO I MANAGE RATS AND MICE?

Like any animal, rats and mice will live in places where their needs are met. That is the availability of food, water, warmth and harbourage. Good hygiene and tidy housekeeping will generally discourage rodents.

Trapping, the use of poisons and other measures should be done in conjunction with this. There is little point in using poison baits and traps where poor housekeeping and sanitation is a concern as they won't be very effective. Licensed pest management professionals should be contacted where infestations are suspected.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

If you would like additional information on rodents, please contact:

City of Karratha, Environmental Health

Ph: (08) 9186 8555

E-mail: enquiries@karratha.wa.gov.au

Website: www.karratha.wa.gov.au/community/health

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