

RODENT CONTROL

Mice and rats can spread diseases such as salmonellosis and Weil's disease. They damage property by chewing and contaminating foodstuffs with urine, hair and droppings.

How Does The Problem Occur?

Rodents often retreat indoors to find sufficient food and nesting materials. They have large curved incisors in both upper and lower jaws, which they use to chew through a range of materials. These teeth grow continuously and are worn down by gnawing on hard materials. Mice and juvenile rats can fit through holes as small as 5mm, and will often follow gaps around cabling and pipe work into and around a property.

It is vital that rodent access is restricted into your property (*proofing*) and premises are made less vulnerable to infestations (*housekeeping and storage*). The below advice provides further information on what **YOU** can do to prevent further infestation.

Proofing

Proofing is the term given to the blocking up of rodent access points into a building. Mice and young rats can squeeze through a gap as small as 5mm, which is the size of a pen. Poisons will only remove a current infestation; they will not stop further infestation from occurring. Long-term control relies upon maintaining proofing and good housekeeping.

Where does proofing need to take place?

Holes will need to be blocked both internally and externally. As well as preventing pests from entering the building, it is also necessary to restrict their movement within. Holes commonly causing issues include: external air bricks, gaps around pipes and cables (such as in kitchens behind sinks and washing machines), gaps under doors and gaps between the floor and wall, particularly where the floor is ill fitting.

Who carries out proofing work?

We always recommend that a qualified builder undertakes the proofing works. Our roles is to identify areas that require proofing, not to carry out the proofing work itself, and there may be other structural factors that need to be considered when carrying out any maintenance work.

What materials should be used?

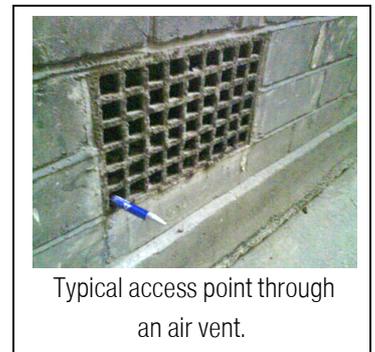
The purpose of proofing is to permanently block any potential access points into the premises. Any gap larger than 5mm needs to be filled with gnaw-proof material, which is then fixed in place using an appropriate adhesive. Sealant alone will quickly be chewed through and rodents can push unsecured blockages out of the hole.

The following is for guidance only:

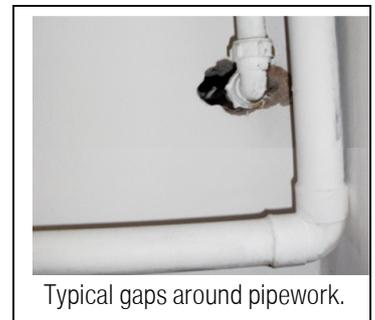
- Steel wire wool should be used to fill holes and gaps, which should then be **fixed** in place with strong adhesives, such as expanding foam or silicone glue.
- Wooden or aluminium panels can be cut to size and fixed over larger gaps.
- Where ventilation is required, a steel mesh with gaps no larger than 5mm can be used.



Brown rat (*Rattus norvegicus*)



Typical access point through an air vent.



Typical gaps around pipework.



Gap under a door.

- Gaps under door can be blocked by fixing kick plates or stiff bristle strips to the base. Installing a ramp under the door is also a possibility. Gaps should be sufficiently closed at both ends of the door and in the middle of double doors.
- Larger gaps can be filled using concrete mixed with either larger stones or broken glass. Please note rodents can burrow through this whilst wet.

Housekeeping and Storage

It is important to maintain high levels of hygiene so pests are not attracted to your property in the first place. This also eliminates alternative food sources for any pests currently in the area so they have no choice but to eat poisons. Pests may hide amongst poorly-stored material and they may use items such as paper, cardboard and fabrics to make nests.

Housekeeping–Kitchens

- Food should be stored in pest-proof containers and lids should always be used and replaced.
- Plastic containers should have an airtight seal
- Food should not be left out uncovered, as the smell will attract pests in and the food provides an alternative food source reducing the effect of any pest management programs on the premises.
- Any crumbs or spills must be immediately cleaned up.

Housekeeping – Communal Areas

- Premises should be kept clean and tidy to reduce sources of food and harbourage sites.
- Staff locker rooms, changing rooms, dining rooms and washrooms should be checked and cleaned regularly.
- Food should not be stored in desk drawers. No food waste should be deposited in office bins.



Poor housekeeping will attract pests to a site.

Storage – Communal Areas

- Smaller items should be stored in sturdy, pest-proof boxes (metal or plastic, not cardboard), with tightly-fitting lids.
- Large boxes or items should be stored away from walls with space between them to allow for regular cleaning.
- Small stored items should be kept at least 25cm above the floor, or packed into larger storage containers.
- Storerooms should be kept in good condition, and cleaned regularly.
- No items should be stored in riser cupboards at any time.

Bin Areas

- In internal areas, all waste should be stored in a secure container with a tight fitting lid, which should be removed at the end of each day, or as necessary. Storage of food waste in internal bins is not recommended.
- Sufficient sturdy external waste bins should be provided, with well-fitting lids or covers, since many pests are very good climbers and no waste should be left on the floor.
- External refuse areas should be hosed down regularly to prevent excessive build-up of spilled waste.

Damp

- Standing water or leaking pipes can damage stored items, and act as further attractants to pest species.
- Damaged pipework may also be associated with pest activity, for example rodents may have gnawed through pipework in wall cavities or underground. Damaged plumbing can also allow access from sewers.
- Damp can also make housekeeping difficult to maintain. Sources of damp should be identified and repaired as soon as possible.