

***QUESTIONS
AND ANSWERS
ABOUT
RODENT
CONTROL***



**City of Oak Park
Code Enforcement Division
(248) 691-7450**



Meet the Enemy...

Rats have accompanied people to most areas of the world. People's indifference and carelessness in handling food and refuse have fostered populations of rats in such close proximity to their homes and work that they are called domestic rodents.

There are several species of rats, but the one we are concerned with is the Norway Rat (*Rattus norvegicus*). This species is also called the barn rat, brown rat, house rat, wharf rat, and sewer rat.

Rats are Bad!

- Rats spread disease like: salmonellosis, leptospirosis, plague, and rat bite fever.
- Rats bite people (usually defenseless adults and babies).
- Rats contaminate and destroy food.
- Rats destroy property.
- Rats cause hysteria when seen.
- Rats' gnawing on electrical wires may cause fires.

Rat proofing the building.....

- Seal all holes and openings within 3 feet of the ground.
- Seal all holes and openings ½ inch and larger.
- Use 17-gauge hardware cloth.
- Use 24-gauge sheet metal.
- Use Concrete, Brick, and Mortar.

Rats Can:

- Squeeze through a ½ inch hole.
- Climb horizontal and vertical wires.
- Reach vertically 18 inches.
- Jump vertically 3 feet.
- Swim up floor drains.
- Swim up sewer lines.
- Swim through a toilet bowl trap.
- Survive on pet food and pet droppings.



Killing them with Poisons:



It's recommended to hire an exterminator. The most commonly used poisons are those that prevent blood clotting. These are slow acting poisons and rats need several feedings, so it is

necessary to maintain a continuous fresh supply until feeding stops. Label directions will tell you how many days. It is usually 8 to 12 days. Most major chain stores, farm supply stores, and grain and elevator facilities have poisons and traps.

FOLLOW THE DIRECTIONS ON THE LABELS.

****House pets can be poisoned if not monitored.**

With Traps:

Snap traps are the safest and the least expensive way to kill rats.

- Place several traps along identified runways.
- Place trap with trigger toward the wall.
- An expanded trigger increase effectiveness.
- Expand triggers with 2-inch square cardboard or hardware cloth.
- Bait traps with peanut butter, raisins, bacon, or canned cat food (fish/meat flavored).
- Non-baited traps also are effective.



Norway Biology Rat Facts:

Description:

Size- Adults are 12-18 inches long with a tail 5-8 inches long.

Fur- Normally their fur is brown to reddish gray on the back and grayish white on the belly.

Body Type- They are heavy set with sparsely haired tail, blunt nose, and ears which are short, hairy and set closely to the head.

Droppings- Feces are capsule shaped and up to $\frac{3}{4}$ inch long.

Reproduction:

Breeding Season- Breeding Peaks in the Spring and Fall in this region.

Gestation Period- The average term of pregnancy is 22 days.

Litter Size- Females have 6-12 young per litter.

Number of Litters- Females have 4-7 litters per year.

Number of young reared- A single female normally produces about 40 young per year but only half of these live to be weaned.

Maturation- Young begin to take solid food at 3 weeks and obtain sexual maturity at 3 months old.

Life Span- Rats live and average of one year.

Habits:

Harborage- Norway rats live in burrows 12-18 inches below the ground and under 3 feet in length.

Range- A rat normally lives within 100-150 feet of its food source.

Feeding- They are omnivorous and seek food and water primarily at night. They prefer eating in protected areas. Since their teeth constantly grow, rats must gnaw frequently.

Looking for Rats? Here's How.....



Burrows- Rats live in nests made in burrows in the ground. Look for holes or fresh diggings under concrete slabs, near garbage storage areas, along earth banks, near brush piles, and near similar places that provide harborage.



Droppings- Look for black shiny capsule shaped droppings with blunt ends. Norway rat droppings are approximately $\frac{3}{4}$ inch long.



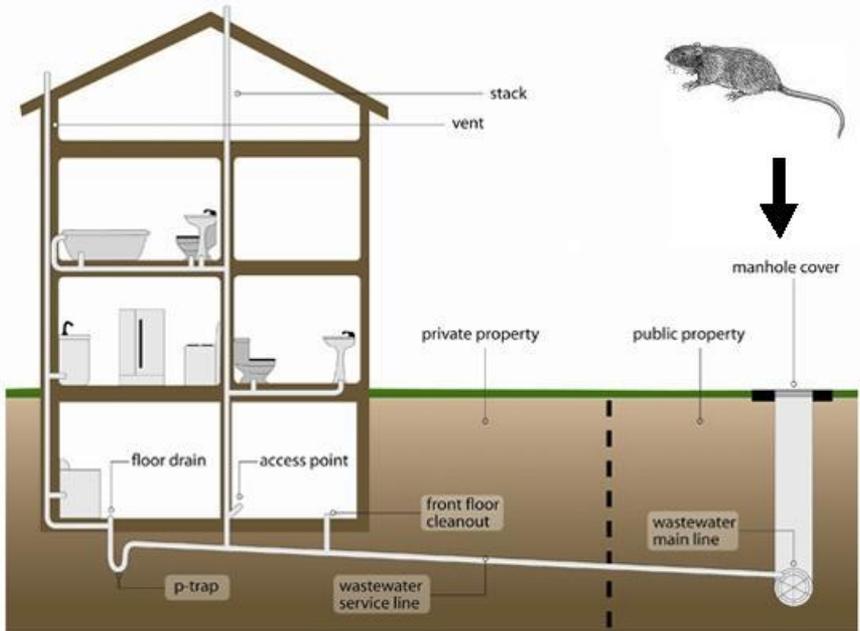
Runways- Outdoor: Look for narrow beaten paths of earth free of debris. Indoors: Look for greasy smear marks long walls, steps, and runways where Rats travel.



Gnaw Marks- Look for distinct teeth marks and light colored wood chips for fresh gnaw marks. Rats like to gnaw on door ledges, corners, stored materials, etc...

How Norway Rats enter your home:

Norway rats have the ability to enter the home through the sewer lines. They find breaks in drain pipes caused by faulty joints, poor construction or by tree roots, and then burrow through the ground, dumping excavated earth back into the sewers. Thus they come up into yards, under sidewalks, driveways, flower beds and enter a building.



Preventive Maintenance

Before



One of the causes of infestations is un-pruned yards. Take close notice of the pictures above and below. Infestations occur in yards that resemble the “before” picture.

* Please be advised, that the City does not enforce the trimming of hedges and bushes.

After



How can Rats be eliminated?

Get rid of existing infestations by...



Starving them....

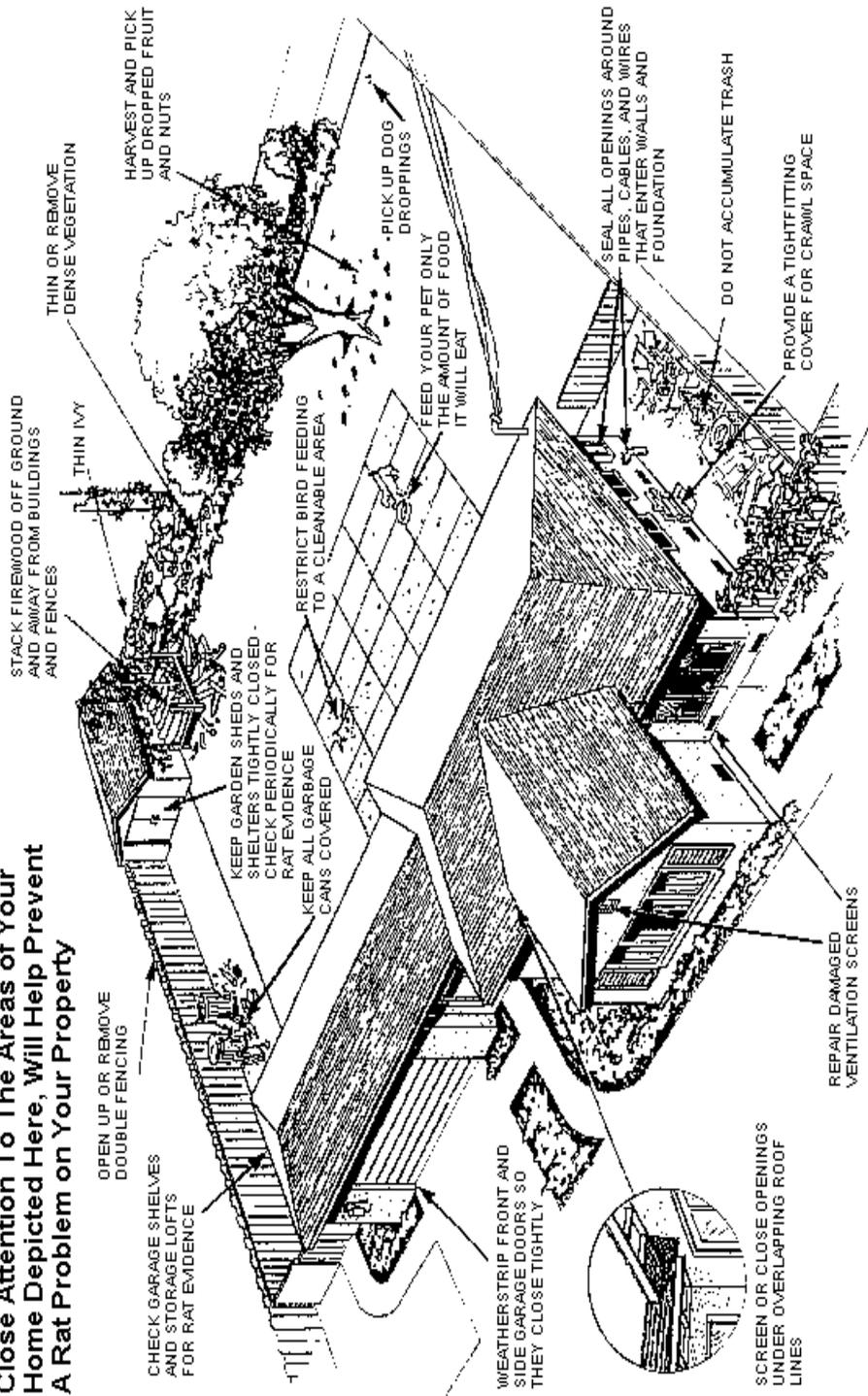
- Proper storage of garbage and rubbish is the single most important factor in rat prevention and elimination.
- Trash cans with tight fitting lids are essential.
- Plastic bags are not rat proof.
- Do not leave excess pet food sitting out.
- Wash pet food dishes daily.
- Feed birds from a bird feeder at least 4 feet off the ground and clean up dropped seed often.

Cleaning the premises....

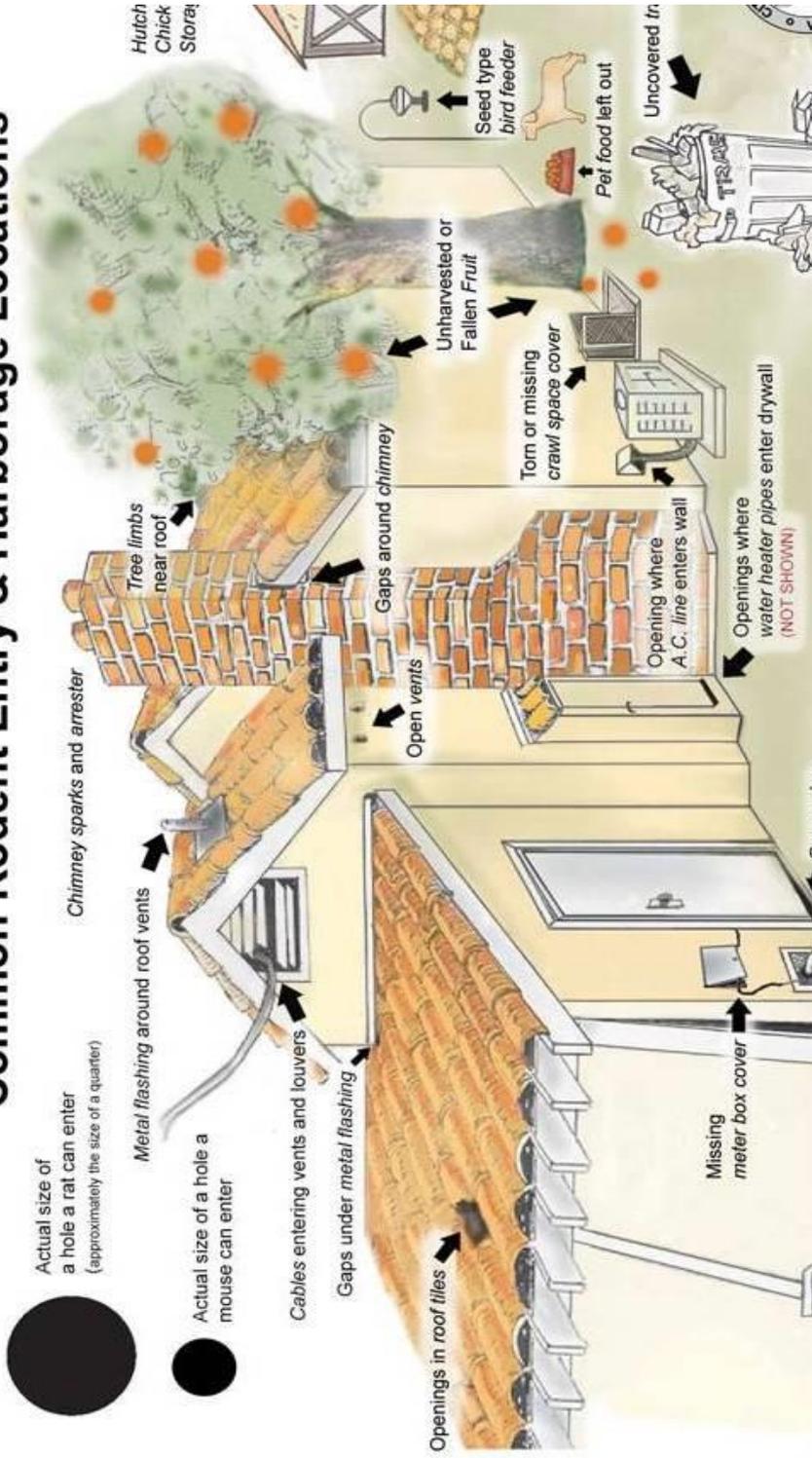


- Get rid of all unnecessary articles, junk and large rubbish items.
- Cut weeds and grass regularly.
- Store lumber/firewood on racks at least 18 inches off the ground.
- Clean dog kennels/pen areas daily.
- Remove dog waste and feces daily.

Close Attention To The Areas of Your Home Depicted Here, Will Help Prevent A Rat Problem on Your Property



Common Rodent Entry & Harborage Locations



Local exterminators are one of the best options to explore when eradicating your rodent infestation. To find a licensed pest control professional, look under “pest control” in your phonebook of choice. If you require assistance when choosing an exterminator, please feel free to contact the City’s Code Enforcement Officers at (248) 691-7450.

Working Together

Rats do not abide by property lines. Neighbors must work together to ensure the elimination of a Rat infestation. By following the enclosed suggestions of this brochure, community members can eradicate this problem.

Suggestions:

The City of Oak Park has been working with our trash collector and SOCRRA on affordable options with regards to your weekly trash pick-up. We have ordered 50 mini-dumpsters for storage of your weekly trash. The dumpsters should be arriving in late October. The cost is \$60 and includes delivery. They will be sold on a first come first serve basis. **The City of Oak Park recommends the use of these dumpsters.** They are the only City approved oversized container, 95 gallon in size, made of durable polyethylene that is 100% recyclable, easily maneuverable, and have attached lids to keep rodents away. *Come into City Hall to pre-pay and reserve your mini-dumpster.* Once these 50 mini-dumpsters are gone, additional dumpsters can be ordered from Tringali Sanitation (248-585-9120) for \$90 each.



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