

ENQUIRIES

Food and Environmental Hygiene Department
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3rd Floor, Tai Shing Street Market Building,
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Kowloon City

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Sham Shui Po

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Tuen Mun

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Yuen Long

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Sha Tin

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Pest Control Advisory Section

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Prevent Disease Eliminate Rodent Nuisance

Household setting



Types and Characteristics of Rodents

Rodents are social animals living in family groups or colonies. They have good senses of smell, touch and hearing, and are good at swimming and climbing. A rodent can locate itself and direct movement by its strong memory. Their reproductive rate is very high: an adult female rodent can give birth to about 50 young rats in a year. Common types of rodents include *Rattus norvegicus* (sewer rat), *Rattus rattus* (black rat) and *Mus musculus* (house mouse).

Hazards caused by Rodents

1. Transmission of Diseases

The biggest problem caused by rodents is public health hazards. Rodents can directly or indirectly transmit to humans diseases such as plague, scrub typhus, urban typhus, hantaviral infection and leptospirosis. Rodents, living in dirty environment, are prone to carry pathogens. Ingestion of food and water contaminated by rodents may cause food poisoning and other infectious diseases.

2. Loss of Property

Rodents cause financial loss by gnawing building fittings and household furniture. They may even bite electric wires or cables, causing fire due to short-circuiting. Besides, they may gnaw and damage telephone wires and computer cables.

3. Biting People

Rodents may bite people of low mobility, such as babies, the aged, the invalid, the disabled or people who are asleep.

Signs of Rodent Infestation

Apart from finding rodents around the premises, other signs of rodent infestation include rodent droppings, holes, runways, gnawing marks, footmarks and smears.

Measures to Prevent and Control Rodent Infestation

1. Basic Principles

a) Eliminate Food Sources for Rodents

- Keep your home and the surrounding areas clean, especially the refuse rooms and stairways.

- Store food and handle pet food properly so that they will not become food for rodents.
- Store all refuse and food remnants in dustbins with well-fitted covers. Dustbins must be emptied at least once a day.
- Refuse bags should be tied up to prevent spillage, and then disposed of properly in refuse collection chambers with well-fitted covers.

b) Eliminate Rodent Harborage

- Clear away the refuse and disused articles at homes and in the communal areas of a building.
- Regularly clear up the void underneath or behind bulky furniture, and inspect any concealed places like false ceilings, air ducts and wire ducts.
- Seal any holes or crevices in the ceilings, walls or floors.
- Keep flowerbeds clean and tidy without accumulation of refuse and articles.

c) Stop Rodents from Entering Premises

- Fix gratings with apertures not more than 6 mm to all drain outlets. Replace them if they are damaged.
- Use metal plates or cement to seal all the openings left in the external walls, floors and roofs after the installation of pipes, wires or split-type air conditioners.
- Render all ventilation openings rodent-proof by installing strong wire meshes with apertures not greater than 6 mm or other rodent-proofing devices.
- Affix metal plates of at least 30 cm high to the lower parts of doors and door frames to keep rodents away. Threshold clearance should not exceed 6 mm to prevent rodents from entering the premises.

2. Supplementary Measures

a) Trapping

- Use baited trapping devices (e.g. cages) at the places frequently visited by rodents.

b) Poisoning

- Use rodenticides with caution. Strictly follow the application instructions to avoid harming people and other animals.