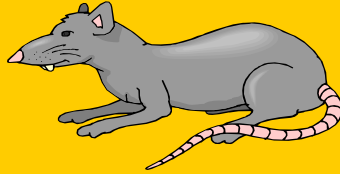


Schools & Rodent Control Advisory (Fall)



Rodents (mice, rats, squirrels, etc.) are one of the more problematic indoor pest related problems on school property. As the weather turns cooler, rodents enter structures to seek shelter from the cold. There are many preventative measures schools can take to reduce the likelihood of infestations.

Damage potential:

In addition to sanitary and health risks, the gnawing activity of rodents can lead to significant structural damage. If electrical wiring is gnawed, there is an increased risk of fire.

Rodent Prevention & Management Strategies:

Like all pests, the key to managing rodents involves the elimination/reduction of the four main elements pests need to survive.

- Food
- Access
- Water
- Shelter

Denying access:

Denying entry is a key component of rodent prevention.

Doors:

A favored entry point for rodents and other pests is underneath doors. Mice need less than a quarter of an inch of space to enter a building (*about the diameter of a pencil*). We strongly recommend the installation of door sweeps on all exterior doorways. Brush type door sweeps are recommended over rubber or hard plastic, which tends wear out quicker leading to a higher replacement interval and long-

term costs.

Large utility doors:

Large utility doors associated with storage sheds and garages should be inspected to make sure they close completely to the ground *with no gaps*.

Pipe Chases & Wiring Outlets:



Another favored entry point for rodents is around pipe chases and wiring leading from the exterior of the building. This is especially true for older buildings. Work with the facilities manager to identify & seal any gaps or voids associated with plumbing or wiring. Any voids or gaps should be sealed with copper mesh, expandable foam or similar materials.

Caution: As always, extreme caution should be used when working around electrical wiring and in some instances may require hiring an electrician.

Eliminating shelter:

Unknowingly, we often create the perfect interior & exterior environments for rodents. Minor indoor & outdoor modifications can make the property less inviting to rodents and other pests.

Exterior

Mulch:

To discourage rodent borrowing activity, we strongly recommend the use of crushed stone as an alternative to woodchips. Accumulated wood mulch against buildings not only promotes rodents borrowing activity but will also increase the likelihood of termite activity.

Landscaping:



During the warmer months rodents may seek shelter under or within a patch of low growing shrubbery. As the weather turns cooler they will often seek a warmer location, which could be the classroom building or cafeteria a few inches away. Additionally, ivy and other vines provide an excellent ladder for rodents and other pests to reach the interior of your school. For this reason, we strongly recommend against the planting of low growing shrubbery and vines near buildings.

Interior:

Reducing clutter:



Rodents such as mice are very shy and prefer a cluttered environment to take shelter and breed. Schools will often have storage or utility rooms filled with boxes and equipment which is often forgotten about. While the need for storage on school property is indisputable, there are strategies that can be used to make storage/utility rooms less inviting to rodents and other pests.

- **Wall clearance:** If avoidable, never store boxes directly against the wall. Mice and rats typically use walls as runways of travel and will feel more protected traveling between the narrow space between boxes and the wall. A reasonable clearance should be placed between the wall and storage. This will also allow for more effective monitoring (placement of glue boards, etc.). Empty boxes should be broken down and recycle as soon as possible
- **Storage rotation:** Stored items (older desks, tables, etc.) which unlikely to be used again should be either discarded or donated to another school, town agency, or charity.

Eliminating Food:

Eliminating sources of food is another essential component for your rodent prevention strategy. This includes reducing sources of food on school exterior and grounds as well as indoors.

Exterior & grounds:

Dumpster Management



An obvious hot zone for rodent and other pests activity is the dumpster area. Maintaining proper dumpster management, however, can help reduce or eliminate rodents and other pests from that area.

- Dumpsters should only be placed on a solid concrete or asphalt surface. Otherwise rodents can borrow underneath the dumpster.
- Dumpsters and other outdoor trash receptacles should never be allowed to overflow.
- During the warmer months, dumpsters should be periodically rinsed with a pressurized hose (this will also reduce the number of flies and stinging insects).
- Make sure the dumpster drainage hole is properly sealed to prevent rodent entry.

Feeding of wildlife:

The feeding of pigeons, geese, squirrels and other wildlife can attract mice and rats and therefore should be discouraged at all cost. Signs discouraging this activity can be useful.

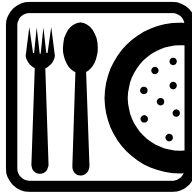
Indoors:

Sanitation:



Good sanitation is key to keeping your school pests free. Frequent sweeping and mopping of food prep/service areas is critical for the prevention of all pests. One area frequently missed for cleaning is the area behind or near cooking and food prep equipment. These areas should be monitored closely.

Food:



Try to enforce a policy where students and staff only eat within designated areas. All non-refrigerated/canned foods should be placed in airtight containers. Any departments that work with live animals (Science Dept. for example) should likewise store food in airtight containers

Eliminating Water:

Rodents need amazingly little to survive indoors. Nonetheless, steps should be taken to eliminate excess moisture indoors & outdoors.

Indoors



The most obvious cause of excess moisture indoors comes from leaking plumbing. For this reason all leaks should be repaired as quickly as possible. Condensation on plumbing is another source of moisture, which can be remedied through the insulation of pipes.

Outdoors:



Identify and remove objects, which can accumulate rainwater (especially adjacent to the building). In addition to removing a source of water for rodents, this will also eliminate a potential source for mosquito breeding.

For additional information on rodent control in schools, please visit the following websites:

University of Wisconsin:

http://ipcm.wisc.edu/programs/school/section_5/ratsmice.htm

Environmental Protection Agency (EPA)

<http://www.epa.gov/pesticides/ipm/schoolipm/chap-12.pdf>

Virginia Cooperative Extension

<http://www.ext.vt.edu/pubs/entomology/444-512/444-512.html>