

Rodent Control

Fast Facts



CONTACT US

8132 3600

www.eha.sa.gov.au

eha@eha.sa.gov.au

Feral rats and mice are widespread throughout the metropolitan area and in our community. The most common species within this area are the Norway Rat (*Rattus Norvegicus*) and the Roof Rat (*Rattus Rattus*). They are very adaptable public health pests. They are not fussy eaters and can make themselves at home in your house and around your property. As well as potentially causing unpleasant odours and damage to your property, they can pose a risk to human health. It is almost impossible to completely eradicate feral rats and mice; however, there are actions that can be taken to reduce the problem.

Native Australian Rodents, for example Hopping Mice, pose little or no threat to public health and should be left alone as they are protected species.

1. Identifying feral rodent activity

Rodents are generally more active at night. If you see rats during the day, this usually indicates high numbers or that there is a good food supply nearby. Other telltale signs include:

- Thin black droppings approx. 1cm (10mm) long.
- 'Rat runs' formed when rats create a distinct path along walls, fences or paths. Rats tend to leave greasy smears on walls or fences if they use that run for some time.
- Damage to a variety of material with obvious gnawing of wood, plastic, wiring or other items.
- Evidence of nesting or burrow holes or shredded materials.
- Eaten off is usually left hollow – such as oranges, pumpkins, almonds, snails.
- Food left for pets has gone missing.



2. To reduce the number of rodents on your property, consider minimising food and shelter sources:

Food Sources

- Ensure rubbish bins have tight fitting lids and bins are emptied regularly.
- Store garbage and food waste in enclosed bins and ensure that they are regularly emptied.
- Dispose of food scraps.
- Remove fallen fruit and nuts on regular basis.
- Do not use open compost heaps.
- Do not compost any animal products (fish, meat, chicken, cheese, butter) or pet faeces.
- Leave out just enough pet food for pets to eat soon after it is placed there.
- Store poultry or other animal food in vermin proof containers with close fitting lids.
- Keep chicken coops and bird aviaries clean, ensure excess seed or food is not left lying around.

Shelter Sources

- Keep your home and property clean of rubbish.
- Regularly clean out sheds/garages, storage areas and dispose of unwanted items.
- Ensure your grass is kept short, cut back trees, bushes and creepers
- Stack timber and other building materials at least 30cm off the ground and not against walls/sheds or fences to minimise hiding / nesting / thoroughfare of rats and mice.
- Maintain roof iron or tiles to prevent access to the roof space.
- Inspect living and working areas for potential rodent entrances and block them where possible with:
 - Concrete, hard setting filler, steel wool or heavy gauge sheet metal

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Managing rodents on your property 3.

Chemical control and trapping should only be considered as part of a 'broader control' program to eliminating food sources and rodent harbourage. Chemical control is generally 'short term' and rodents will appear again if food and shelter sources as highlighted are still available.

Rat baits/poisons and traps can be purchased at your local hardware store or supermarket. If baits and traps are used place them near rodent droppings, or likely nest sites or fence lines.

Care should be taken to ensure baits and traps are placed so as to be inaccessible to children, pets and wildlife. Please consider the following before using poisons and traps:

- Domestic pets, native wildlife and children may eat toxic baits or poisoned rodent bodies.
- Gloves should be worn when handling dead rodents and hands should be washed with warm water and soap immediately afterwards.
- Some individuals are sensitive to rodent control chemicals in their environment.
- If rodents die and decay in hard to reach places they may cause an offensive odour.
- Extreme care must be taken when storing and using poisons and read the instructions carefully prior to handling.

4. Disposing of dead rodents

It is important to remove dead rodents from areas where native wildlife and pets can access them. Removing dead rodents should be undertaken with care. Dead rodents can be buried or wrapped and placed into a domestic rubbish bin. Gloves should be worn when handling dead rodents and hands should be washed with warm water and soap immediately afterwards.



What can EHA do?

- Provide information and recommendations to assist with reducing rodent numbers on your property
- We investigate situations where properties are attracting rats. If a complaint is justified appropriate action is taken.

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