



SHELBY COUNTY

HEALTH DEPARTMENT



Public Health
Prevent. Promote. Protect.

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OCTOBER "NATIONAL RODENT PREVENTION MONTH"

To raise awareness of the health risks associated with rodents, October has been designated "National Rodent Prevention Month". October marks the onset of rodent season (October-February); it is the ideal time to inform you on the many dangers of rodents.

Effective rodent control requires multiple methods. It is extremely difficult to eliminate rodent infestations by only using rodenticides. Rats are prolific breeders, so successful rodent control must also include the elimination of the food, water and harborage.

Rodents are carriers of disease including **Salmonella, Trichinosis, Leptospirosis, and Hantavirus in addition to being very destructive to property.**

The following steps provide the basis for effective rodent control around your residence:

1. **Be Aware.** Inspect your property regularly for signs of rodent activity. Common signs include:
 - i. Burrows in the ground often found under decks, patios, porches, garages and piles of trash.
 - ii. Chewed holes on the sides of garages, walls, doors, garbage bags, garbage containers, and pet food bags
 - iii. **Rat droppings usually ¾ inch long**
2. **Be Neat.** Keep your yard free of trash, debris, high grass or accumulations of building supplies. Organizing and/or elevating stored items help reduce rodent harborage and allow you to inspect under and around them easily.
3. **Don't feed Rats .** You may not realize that pet food, dog droppings, open garbage cans, bags of garbage, bird seeds or other food scraps left outside are open invitations for rats to visit you and establish a home in your yard.
4. **Cut off their water supply.** Dump pails, unused flowerpots, toys or equipment in which water can accumulate (these objects also provides a breeding site for mosquitoes during the summer months).
5. **Protect your home.** Seal any holes you find in the foundation of your house, eliminate openings under steps, sidewalks, or porches. Close any threshold gaps under exterior doors. **Use a heavy ¼-inch mesh metal screen over holes around pipes.**
6. **Think about your own activities.** Be sure to clean up any outside eating areas. Especially spillages around the Bar-B-Q grill. Greasy residues on a patio and food residues that build up on cooking equipment may attract rodents for an extended period of time.
7. **Communicate .** Share your observations with your family and your neighbors. They may

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not realize that a problem exists. Everyone involved must address rodent infestations if they are to be successfully controlled or eliminated.

8. **Fight the Rat.** If you see a rat, rat trail, rat burrows or rat droppings, take action immediately. The problem will not just go away. Fill in the burrow to see if it reopens, indicating an active infestation. You should take measures to exterminate the existing population with rodenticide, traps or glue boards. Any abatement must be accompanied utilizing all the steps outlined.

For additional information or to request an inspection of a property suspected or observed with rat activity, please contact the Shelby County Health Department Rodent Control Program at (901) 222-9725 or you can email Vector.Control@shelbycountyttn.gov . Additional information regarding rodent activity and prevention practices can be found by visiting our website <http://www.shelbycountyttn.gov/index.aspx?NID=775>

Rodent Prevention Week: October 22 ~October 26, 2012

Rodent Control display will be set-up:

- Benjamin Hooks Library, 3030 Poplar, October 23, 2012 10:00 am -2:00 pm.
- Goodwill Homes Senior Center, 163 W. Raines Rd., October 25, 2012 9:00 am-10:00 am.
- 38106 Joint Agency Partnership Meeting, Pine Hill Community Center, 973 Alice, October 25, 2012 12:00 pm-2:00 pm.

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