

Rats can be both a serious pest and a cause for public health concern. Rats are known to cause damage to foodstuffs and property. They carry and transmit disease, and they bite people and pets if provoked. By following the recommendations outlined in this pamphlet, Environmental Health Services of the Fraser Health Authority hopes to minimize the local rat population.

For More Information:

*Fraser Health Authority
Environmental Health Services:*
 Burnaby Office.....918-7683
 New Westminster Office.....777-6740
 Tri-Cities Office.....949-7700
 Maple Ridge Office.....476-7000
 Surrey Office.....572-2628
 Mission Office.....814-5500
 Abbotsford Office.....870-7900
 Chilliwack Office.....702-4950
 Hope Office.....869-5661

***In the event of an emergency call the
Poison Control Centre682-5050
OR682-2344***

*Environmental Health Services uses the following
poison baits in the City of Burnaby:*

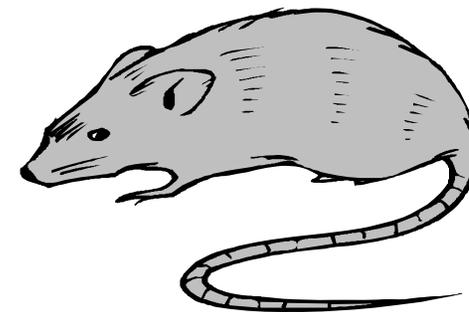
<u>Product</u>	<u>Conc.</u>	<u>PCP#</u>
Bromodiolone (Bromone) meal	0.005%	15678
Chlorophacinone (Rozol) meal	0.005%	11945

Extreme care must be taken when using poison to prevent access by children and pets. If humans or pets swallow these poisons, call a physician or veterinarian immediately.

When using poison, read and carefully follow the label instructions on the packaging.



RAT



**PREVENTION
& CONTROL**

Characteristics

Two species of rats are known to be present in the Health Authority. Neither species of rat is native to North America, nor are both believed to have been introduced by early settlers who visited North America in rat infested ships.

The Norway (brown) rat is quite common in the Health Authority. It is often called a “wharf rat” or “sewer rat”. It has coarse brown to light grey coloured fur, small ears, and a heavyset appearance.

The second species of rat found in the Health Authority is the Black rat or “roof rat”. It has fur that ranges from dark grey to black and has a smaller, sleeker appearance.

Rats have few natural enemies and a high reproductive capacity. They reproduce throughout the year with peaks occurring during the spring and fall months. A rat can produce as many as six litters annually under optimal living conditions. The average gestation period is 22-25 days with an average litter containing 6-12 offspring. Females reach sexual maturity at 3-4 months of age.

Rats are scavengers and eat whenever food is available. They eat a variety of different foods, such as fallen fruit and nuts, bird seed, garbage, pet food and animal waste.

Detection

To determine whether rats have infested your property, check for the following signs.

- **Visual Sightings.** Rats are most active at night. However on occasion they may be seen during the day.
- **Droppings.** These are approximately 1.5 cm (1/2 inch) in length and 0.5 cm (1/4 inch) in diameter. Droppings are seen behind objects, near walls, and in seldom cleaned areas.

- **Burrows.** Rat burrows are 2.5 – 5.0 cm (1 to 2 inches) in diameter. Holes can be seen in the ground along walls or fences, under foundations and floors, and other seldom-disturbed areas.
- **Gnawings.** Rats have front incisor teeth that grow continually. In order to keep their teeth at a manageable length, rats tend to gnaw on a variety of material. Signs of gnawing may be seen along openings, around pipes, under doorways, and on furniture or carpeting.
- **Runways.** Rats have a tendency to use the same path continually, often leaving noticeable tracks or darkened areas along walls, pipes, beams and fences.
- **Sounds.** Rats make gnawing, clawing and scratching noises. They are social animals and this often results in various squeaking, chirping, and fighting noises.
- **Pet Excitement.** Dogs and cats often excitedly probe around areas where rats have recently been present.

Rat Prevention & Control

Since rats can move from one house to another, their control is the responsibility of every homeowner. Although the use of poisons and traps provides a temporary solution, the rat population can quickly return to its original number if food and harbourage remain.

Effective prevention and control involves four essential steps:

1. Remove Harbourage Areas

- Remove refuse and accumulated debris
- Cut down long grass and weeds
- Cut down or trim overgrown bushes and brambles
- Stack lumber and firewood 20 cm (8 inches) off the ground on slats, and 20 cm (8 inches) away from any vertical surface

2. Eliminate Food Sources

- Pick up fallen fruit and nuts
- Use metal garbage cans with tight fitting lids
- Store foodstuffs in metal containers
- Remove accumulated wastes and food from pet enclosures
- Make sure bird feeders are rodent proof and maintained
- Compost only in rodent-resistant containers or bins (Consult the Health Authority, or the GVRD Composting brochure for details)

3. Rat Proofing

- Ensure that doors, windows and screens are tight fitting
- Seal all gaps and spaces larger than 1.0 cm² (1/2” sq.) around all entrance ways and plumbing fixtures. Use material that is difficult for rats to gnaw
- Keep floor drains tightly fastened to prevent entry of rats from sewers
- Screen crawl space and attic vents

4. Reduction of Rat Population

- There are several types of control available to the homeowner. Below are some of the more common types.
- **Traps and Glueboards.** Recommended for control of rats where the use of poisons would be dangerous. Especially useful in houses where odour from dead rats would be a problem. Care should be taken when used around children and pets.
- **Poisons.** Anticoagulant baits are humane and moderately safe to use. These baits prevent normal clotting of the blood causing internal bleeding, which eventually leads to death.

