

Trapping Rats And Mice

Public Health Information from
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Health Department**
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Trapping is a practical way to remove rats and mice. It is particularly useful where the exposure to poisons might be hazardous, or where odors from dead rodents result.

There are many types of rat and mouse traps. One of the most effective and versatile traps is the snap trap, which is generally available in hardware stores.

Baits

Many foods make good baits-peanut butter, nut meats, doughnuts, cake, crisp-fried bacon, cheese, raisins, strawberry jam, and soft candies, particularly milk chocolate and gumdrops. Traps may also be baited by sprinkling rolled oats

over and around the bait trigger. If possible, baits should be fastened by winding a short piece of thread or string around the bait and trigger.

Where food is plentiful and nesting material scarce, good results can sometimes be obtained with cotton tied to the trigger.

Trap-shy individuals may be caught by hiding the entire trap under a layer of flour, dirt, sawdust, fine shavings, or similar lightweight material.

Enlarged Bait Pan

The common wooden-base snap trap can be made more effective by enlarging the bait pan with a piece of heavy cardboard or light

screen wire. Cut the cardboard or screen in the shape of a square smaller than the limits of the guillotine wire and attach it firmly to the bait pan.

To bait the trap, smear a small dab of peanut butter in the center of the enlarged trigger or sprinkle rolled oats over the entire surface. This works well on both rat and mouse placed where the animals commonly run.

Placement of Traps

It is very important to place traps across the paths normally used by rats and mice. If their runways cannot be readily determined, sprinkle a light layer of talcum powder, flour, or similar material in foot-square patches in likely places. Place traps in the areas where tracks appear. As rats and mice like to run close to walls, these spots should be checked first and traps set as shown.

Use boxes or other obstacles to force the rat or mouse to pass over the trigger. Two or more traps set close together produce good results where many rats or mice are present or where trap-shy individuals are a problem. Use plenty of traps rather than rely on one or two to do the job. Due to the short distances normally traveled by mice, place traps within ten-foot intervals of each other.

To protect other animals and small children, a trap box can be built as shown above. Where the animals travel on rafters or pipes, nail the traps in place or set them on nipples clamped to pipes, as shown in the following diagram. Leave traps in place for a few days before moving them to other locations.

Preparation of Traps

Rats and mice are accustomed to human odors. It is not necessary to boil traps or handle them with gloves. Neither

does the scent of dead individuals warn others away. Traps should be checked regularly and adjusted to a fine setting.

providers of health services receiving Federal funds through Prince George's County Health Department, contractors and subcontractors.

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Glues

A sticky substance similar to fly paper can be used to catch rats and mice. While this is an effective supplementary method, dust and debris clog the paper and the tackiness may disappear in a week or less in cold weather. This material is spread in squares of tar paper or heavy cardboard. Usually, bait is placed in the center and the squares laid in the active runways. As rats and mice become entangled, they can be killed, rolled up in the paper, and disposed of.

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