Facts About: How to Recognize and Eliminate A Rat Problem

You have a rat problem if you check either of the 2 boxes below:

☐ I have seen either live rats, dead rats or signs of rats.
☐ My neighbors have seen live rats, dead rats or signs of rats.

Where to Look for Rats:
- Under slabs or ground cover
- Under or around woodpiles
- Under sheds or outbuildings
- Along walls of houses or buildings

Signs of Rats:
- Rat burrows in ground
- Rat runs, rat droppings
- Gnaw marks (on doors, packaging, containers, etc.)

Five Steps to Get Rid of a Rat Problem:

1. Find the rat food.  
   **Check**
   - Look for rat food, such as:
     - Pet food left outside or bird feed on the ground
     - Pet feces on the ground
     - Garbage or trash on the ground
     - Open garbage can or cans with holes in them.
     - Fallen fruit, vegetables or compost piles with garbage in them.
     - Bags of seed or pet food in garages or sheds.

2. Get rid of the rat food.  
   **Check**
   - Take pet food into the house after feeding (or - feed your pet indoors).
   - Keep bird feed off ground by putting trays under feeders.
   - Put animal feces and trash into metal garbage cans. Close with tight-fitting lids.
   - Rake up fruit and vegetables daily. Do not put garbage in compost piles.
   - Put dog food and bird seed stored in garages and sheds into covered metal containers.

   **Check**
   - Buy boxes of standard rat bait at your local hardware store.
   - Use bait according to instructions.
   - Protect bait from children, pets, and weather by placing it in cardboard.
   - Place the bait near rat signs: in burrows or against buildings.
   - Replenish bait every day for 10 days. If bait gets wet, change it.
   - If rats do not eat bait within 3 days, change the location.
   - Keep children and pets away from bait.

4. Check for live rats.  
   **Check**
   - After baiting for 10 days, test for signs of live rats: kick dirt in rat burrows and check for reopened holes 1 day later.
   - If you find signs of live rats, continue baiting for 5 more days.
   - Look for dead rats, and use shovel to dispose of them in sealed plastic bags. Place the bags into garbage cans.
   - Stay away from any live rats.

5. Get rid of rat shelter.  
   **Check**
   - Remove junked furniture, appliances and junked cars from your yard.
   - Mow down tall weeds and grass.
   - Stack lumber, building materials and firewood at least 18” above the ground.
   - Fill in rat burrows with dirt and put lime around the area.

- Rats can infest a large area. All neighbors must work together to get rid of rats.
- Share this flyer with your neighbor, or call the Health Department for extra copies.
- If you and your neighbors have completed all 5 Steps to Get Rid of a Rat Problem and still have a rat problem, contact the Prince George’s County Health Department.