

# Facts About: How to Recognize and Eliminate A Rat Problem

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**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.

### 3. Bait for rats. 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.