

Mice and rats in food premises

Why do mice and rats in a food premises matter?

Mice and rats damage food, drink and property. In addition, they can spread serious foodborne infections including food poisoning organisms.

What are the signs of an infestation?

Visual sighting of mice and rats (rodents)
Smell
Damage to food, food packaging and property
Gnaw marks
Droppings
Grease marks
Foot prints and tail marks
Holes in ground outside property

How can they get into my premises?

In food packaging
Through broken air bricks, open windows, missing roof tiles or slates
Through the drainage system
In via fresh air inlets where the gauze or mesh is missing
Through outside doors being left or propped open

What is meant by effective pest control?

In short eradication of the pests and removal of risk to customers or consumers.
Effective pest control involves:
R- Recognition of pests and infestation
A- Appreciation of risk to customers, consumers, staff, property and stock
P- Prescribing the correct treatment
I – Implementation of correct treatment
D – Determination to complete course of treatment and to ensure an infestation does not happen again.

What is the correct treatment?

The most effective form of pest control is:

GOOD HOUSEKEEPING (70%):

Keeping premises clean and free from refuse or food debris.

REPAIR (20%): Repairing broken doors, windows, slates, tiles, airbricks, fresh air inlets, drainage systems, holes in premises etc.

USE OF CHEMICALS (10%): Pesticides to kill the rodents

What can I do to reduce the risk?

- Check your suppliers' pest control records
- Keep doors and windows closed
- Ensure the drainage systems are in a good state of repair
- Adopt a clean as you go policy
- Do not leave food lying around
- Put food waste and other refuse in bins with lids
- Train and instruct staff to recognise signs and action to take on seeing rodents
- Employ a reputable pest control company.

Where can I find a pest control company?

Use Yellow Pages (www.yell.co.uk) to find a competent pest control contractor.

Ensure the contractor belongs to the British Pest Control Association (www.bpca.org.uk)

What will the pest control contractor do?

After a survey to identify the nature and extent of the infestation it is likely that poison bait will be laid which the rodents will eat. You must not touch or move the bait boxes or trays when you are cleaning.

All parts of the premises should be accessible to the contractor. Skirting boards, fridges, and other equipment may have to be moved or removed to lay bait. Sometimes contractors use sticky boards or traps.

How long will control take?

This depends on the extent of the infestation. Keep housekeeping standards high and train staff to be vigilant. Maintain the pest control contract as a preventative measure.

What will the EHO or food premises inspector expect to see?

If an officer from the Council's Food Safety Team has identified an infestation you should act quickly to control it as soon as possible. Infestations are a serious matter. You may have to close your premises to ensure that effective treatment can be carried out. Once you have employed a pest control contractor the Council officers will expect to see a pest control logbook completed by the contractor. You should act on the house keeping notes in the logbook. The officer will expect to hear from you when your contractor is satisfied that the treatment has worked.

Are there any tasks I have to perform before opening for business?

- Use a sanitiser on all surfaces that come in contact with food or hands.
- Wash all cutlery, glasses and catering utensils. A dishwasher is best for this task.
- Clean and sanitise all catering equipment.

- Train your staff and instruct them on what action to take on seeing a rodent. Remind them that good personal hygiene is essential.
- As a closing check remove all open food and food debris.
- If in doubt get contact the local authority for advice.