

## **Pest Control – Rats and Mice**

**Publication / Date:** The CHOA Journal Spring 2019

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Whenever a strata corporation is dealing with a pest control issue the most important and first decision is how to address the problem and how to prevent future issues. The strata corporation has the responsibility to maintain and repair common property and common assets, and owners must maintain and repair their strata lots.

### **Signs of rats or mice**

Things to watch for if you are concerned about rats and mice:

- Droppings, odours
- Tracks (eg, footprints),
- Chewed services or nested debris,
- Runs or burrows, or
- Sounds.

### **Reporting a problem with rats and mice**

Rats can cause health concerns, so it's important to do something right away. Notify your strata council and/or strata manager if you think there is a pest problem in your strata. Provide as much information as you can, such as location, what you saw, what you heard, etc.

Many strata corporations contract for monthly pest management services to avoid the disruptions and costs of infestations and to ensure they have the funds to respond when problems arise. If your strata does not currently budget for pest control this is something to consider when approving next year's operating budget at the AGM.

### **Dealing with a rat or mouse on your property**

As soon as you realize you have a rat or mouse problem, act quickly. Call a professional if needed.

Responding in a timely manner to eliminate a mouse or rat problem is the quickest and most economical

solution. This is best in the hands of the strata corporation if the infestation affects more than one strata lot or common property. If the source or cause of the infestation can be linked to the activity of a strata lot, your strata council may consider recovering associated costs against an owner. Also, look to your bylaws and/or rules to identify if the owner has breached any of those provisions or acted in a manner that caused the problem. Typical violations that may cause infestations could be operating a recycling facility in a strata lot, hoarding or unauthorized alterations.

### **Preventing rats and mice**

There are many different things owners and/or a strata corporation can do to prevent rats and mice from becoming a problem, for example:

- Block the rats and mice from getting in
- Conduct regular common property inspections for possible points of entry, for example repair broken window and door screens, and replace broken dryer vents.
- Check weather stripping and soffits for chew marks.
- Seal any opening you think a rat or mouse can get into - try to block any opening bigger than 1cm.
- Make sure garage doors touches the ground.
- Check the building foundation for cracks and holes.
- Prohibit owners from storing food outside.
- Keep all garbage bins clean
- Keep bins closed if your municipality collects organic waste.
- Ensure owners keep BBQ's clean and put away any leftovers right away.
- If your strata allows pets make sure owners store pet food securely inside their strata lot.

- If your strata has a commercial component, such as a restaurant, make sure the owner disposes of all commercial waste properly.
- If your strata allows bird feeders, ensure owners use rodent-proof bird feeders and regularly sweep up any bird seed that falls on the ground.
- Keep fruit and nut trees tidy and remove all dropped or rotten fruit.

### **Resources and where to go for help**

- Many municipalities offer information on their websites. For example, the City of Surrey has valuable information posted at: <https://www.surrey.ca/city-services/20313.aspx> or the City for Kelowna has information posted on their website at: <https://www.kelowna.ca/parks-recreation/urban-trees-wildlife/urban-wildlife/rodent-management>
- Check out the Structural Pest Management Association of BC resources at: <http://www.spmabc.com/information-central/pest-information/>
- Visit the government of BC website at [www.gov.bc.ca](http://www.gov.bc.ca) and search “managing pests”
- Speak with your strata manager (if you have one).
- Speak with family, friends and colleagues for pest control company referrals.