

June 1, 2020

[NAME]  
[ADDRESS]  
[TOWN]

Dear Resident:

The West Hartford-Bloomfield Health District recently became aware of a rodent concern in your neighborhood. We would like to provide you with some information to help you protect your property. With your assistance, we can deny the basic needs of food, water and shelter to these pests and make your neighborhood rodent-free.

First, assess the conditions at your home to determine if you have a rodent problem by noting if the following conditions exist:

- Identifying Rodent Activity**
- **Droppings** – Check for 1 inch long and approximately ¼ inch diameter “rice” shaped, dark brownish black droppings.
  - **Gnawing marks or damage** – Check for chewing or damage on garbage cans, bottoms of doorways, around plumbing or other openings.
  - **Running tracks** – Check for noticeable pathways along fences and buildings or near shrubs or tall grass.
  - **Burrows** – Check for holes in the ground approximately 1-2 inches in diameter.

If you observe the above conditions and feel that you have a rodent problem on your property, please remember that denying the basic needs of food, water and shelter is necessary to control these pests. Please help us by observing the following precautions:

- Rodent Control Measures**
- Keep all garbage (especially food wastes) in covered, tight-fitting containers. Do not put garbage outside in paper or plastic bags.
  - **Do not leave food out for the rodents**, do not feed the birds, do not add food wastes to compost piles, and do not leave pet food outside in containers that can be chewed through. If you have a pet, remove its feces as frequently as possible.
  - Check to make sure your house, garage, tool shed, etc. are rodent-proof. Seal deteriorated concrete gaps, holes in walls, around plumbing etc. to prevent the entry of rodents. Use metal screening to protect vents or other openings to your home.
  - Remove hiding places from your property by eliminating the clutter in your yard, garage, storage shed, etc. Remove unused piles of lumber or debris. Firewood should not be stored directly on the ground.

- Remove fallen fruits or nuts from your yard. If you have a garden, remove vegetables as soon as they have ripened. Cut back any overgrown vegetation and keep shrubs neatly trimmed along fences and your home.

In addition to observing the above precautions, you may want to contact a professional exterminator or you may want to set traps on your property. If you decide to set traps on your property, please be aware of the following:

- Proper Use of Traps**
- “Snap traps” are available in different sizes. Small traps should be used to control mice and the larger traps should be used to control rats.
  - Several traps should be set on the property. If you decide to set a trap inside your home or other structure, ensure that the trap is accessible and checked frequently. Remove any trapped rodents from your home as quickly as possible.
  - Bait the trap with peanut butter, nuts or seeds, bacon, or pieces of fruit.
  - Initially bait the trap but do not set it. Check the bait daily for signs that rodents are feeding. If there is feeding activity, set the trap and monitor frequently.
  - Set the traps in areas of observed rodent activity as described above. However, ensure to set the traps in areas where children and pets will not come into contact with them.

**Note:** It is strongly advised that only professional exterminators use rat poison to control rodent activity.

If the above precautions and actions are taken and you still feel that you have a rodent problem on your property **consider hiring a professional exterminator.**

The West Hartford-Bloomfield Health District will be surveying your neighborhood in the coming weeks to ensure that all the proper rodent control measures are in place and to review the status of the rodent activities in your neighborhood. If conditions remain on your property that attract rodents to food, water and shelter, we will notify you of the condition and what you can do to correct the problem(s) on your property. If you have any questions or require additional information, feel free to contact the West Hartford-Bloomfield Health District at (860) 561-7900.

Sincerely,

Chris Hansen, REHS/RS, M.P.H.  
Environmental Sanitarian III