

The City of University Park

Tips on prevention and control of
Norway & Roof Rats



Both Norway and Roof rats live in close association with people, and they are commonly found across North Texas. The information in this brochure provides some basic information on their characteristics, habits and methods to control them. For more information, you can contact the **University Park Animal Control** at **(214) 987-5371**. For treatment and removal of rats around your residence or place of business, we urge you to seek the guidance of a licensed exterminator. To check on the certification of your exterminator, contact the Texas Structural Pest Control Board, in Austin.

Rat Indicators:

Droppings: may be found along pathways, in feeding areas, and near shelter. Droppings may be 3/4 of an inch long and 1/4 of an inch in diameter.

Tracks: may also include tail marks. Tracks can be seen on dusty surfaces or in mud. Sprinkling flour in suspected pathways overnight can help determine if rodents are present.

Runs or Burrows: may be found next to walls, along fences, next to buildings, or under bushes and debris.

Gnawing: may be visible on doors, ledges, in corners, in wall material, on stored materials. Fresh accumulations of wood shavings, insulation, and other gnawed material indicate active infestations. Roof rats often gnaw on electrical wiring in attics and crawl spaces.

Sounds: such as gnawing, climbing in walls, clawing, various squeaks, and fighting noises are common where rats are present, particularly at night and other active periods.

Although it is impossible to accurately determine the number of rats in an area, larger numbers are indicated when three or more are seen at night or when rats are seen in the daytime.

Prevention & Control Tips

Both Norway and Roof rats will eat nearly any kind of food. Rats use their keen sense of smell to locate food items. Good sanitation practices will reduce the rats' sources of food, water and shelter. Norway and Roof rats can enter structures by gnawing, climbing, jumping and even swimming. They can gnaw openings through doors, windows, sills, walls and ceilings. Roof rats often enter roof areas from accesses near utility lines, which they also use to travel from area to area.

Residential

Pet food and birdseed are primary sources of food. To avoid risk, don't feed pets more than they will eat at a single time. Don't leave pet food out overnight, and keep all such material in metal rodent proof containers. Household trash should be kept in heavy-duty, rust resistant, and rat damage resistant containers. Trash cans should also have tight fitting lids. In the yard, keep your grass trimmed and areas under hedges clean.

Rats can enter your home using a hole the size of a quarter. To exclude them, seal all openings larger than 1/2 inch across, including areas where pipes enter the house. Rodent proofing should be done with heavy materials that will resist gnawing. These include concrete, mortar, galvanized sheet metal and heavy-gauge hardware cloth.

Businesses & Restaurants:

Practice proper sanitation and food handling procedures at all times.

If your outside commercial dumpster has a drain hole to facilitate easy cleaning, make sure the hole is fitted with a wire mesh screen or removable plug. If not, the dumpster can become a huge feeding station for rats.

If your business has an alley or is next to a vacant lot or workspace, make sure grass and weeds are trimmed regularly and discarded debris is picked up and placed in the trash.

Norway Rat/Roof Rat

Both Norway and Roof rats are found in the contiguous 48 states. Both species arrived in this country on sailing ships as early as 1775.

The Norway rat is a stocky, burrowing rodent, also called the brown rat, house rat, barn rat, sewer rat, gray rat, or wharf rat. The Norway rat is slightly larger than the roof rat. Adult Norway rats weight about 1 pound. Their fur is coarse and usually is brownish or reddish-gray above, and whitish-gray on the belly. They burrow to make their nests under buildings, beneath concrete slabs, around ponds, in garbage dumps, and at other locations where suitable food, water and shelter are present. Norway rats will eat nearly any kind of food. Norway rats are primarily nocturnal. They usually become active about dusk. When rat populations are high, they may become active during daylight hours.

Roof rats are more sleek and graceful than Norway rats. Their color is uniform: all white, all buff, or all gray. The muzzle of the head is pointed. In contrast, the Norway rat's head is blunt. Roof rats have larger ears than Norway rats. Like Norway rats, Roof rats usually began looking for food after sunset. Unlike Norway rats, Roof rats will travel considerable distances for food. Roof rats live in attics, but also like dense shrubbery, vine-covered trees and fences, and vine ground cover.

Information obtained from: The Department of Forestry, Fisheries and Wildlife. The University of Nebraska-Lincoln.