



# Preventing and Combatting Rat Infestation

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February 16, 2022

# Facts About Rats

## Facts About Rats

- **There's a lot of them:** Rats are an unfortunate reality of urban living. It is estimated that NYC is home to approximately 2 million rats.
- **Impact on humans:** Rats can carry a variety of bacteria and viruses, and harbor fleas, all of which can cause illness in humans. Transmission is possible through contact with rat saliva, urine or feces. Additionally, some people are allergic or have asthmatic reactions to rodent hair, urine or feces. Rat bites of humans are very rare.
- **Versatility:** Adult rats can squeeze through openings as small as 1" in diameter, can jump approximately 3 feet vertically, or 4 feet horizontally, and can survive a fall of approximately 40 feet. Rats can swim and can tread water for 3 days.
- **Nesting and reproduction:** Rats burrow underground or create nests in soft material. They live in colonies of 30-50 rats. A female can have as many as 6 litters each year, each comprising up to a dozen pups – 72 offspring in one year!
- **Feeding habits:** Rats tend to feed not more than a few hundred feet from their burrow, and typically travel the same paths between burrow and food sources. Rats are omnivorous and need as little as 1 ounce of food and water each day to survive.
- **Gnawing:** Rat incisors grow continuously during their lifetime – up to 14 inches annually. They need to gnaw to reduce the size of their teeth.

# Prevention and Mitigation (1)

## Be inhospitable to rats!!!

The most effective way to control rats is to **deny them easy access to food and shelter.**

- **Deny access to food:** Rats can easily gnaw through thin plastic trash pails, and regular trash bags present no challenge at all.
  - Use **heavy duty plastic pails such as Rubbermaid Brute or metal pails** lined with rodent-resistant plastic bags which can be brought to the curb for collection. Pails must have **tight-fitting lids** (and for the lids to be effective, you have to use them!)
  - Rats are very sensitive to smell. Repel them by washing the inside of your trash pails several times each year with a scented solution that rats dislike: **ammonia, bleach, white vinegar, or peppermint oil.** Also, scrub the concrete area in your courtyard where trash pails are kept several times a year with the same solution.
  - Use **rodent-resistant trash bags** (typically mint scented) when bringing trash to the curb for collection.



# Prevention and Mitigation (2)

## Be inhospitable to rats!!!

The most effective way to control rats is to **deny them easy access to food and shelter.**

- **Deny shelter:** Rats can create burrows in front courtyard gardens, tree beds, garden planters, under stoops, underneath cracked sidewalk or courtyard pavement, or enter a building through cracks in the foundation, openings under doors or in cellar trap doors
  - Keep garden areas free of tall weeds or thick bushes that could hide entrances to underground burrows. Periodically inspect areas with thick groundcover such as ivy which could also hide burrow entrances.
  - If burrows are found, collapse them or fill them with gravel or soil tamped down. You may want to first drop dry ice into the burrow opening to suffocate any rats inside.
  - Periodically inspect for and seal foundation cracks. Repair broken sidewalk or courtyard pavement; close vents to under-stoop areas or line them with heavy steel mesh. Ensure external doors have tight-fitting metal door sweeps.

# Prevention and Mitigation (3)

## Baiting and Traps

- While not humane, proper use of rodent bait (poison) is considered by NYC Dept of Health to be an effective way to reduce rat populations.
  - If you live in your own single-family home in NYC, you may place rat bait on your own property. **Owners of multi-family homes and commercial properties must hire a licensed pest control company.**
  - Bait should be placed inside secured, tamper-resistant bait stations. Never cast or spread loose bait where it can be eaten by birds, other small animals or children!
  - To find a licensed pest control company, search for “integrated pest management” companies as they are more likely to do a thorough inspection, make recommendations and appropriate repairs as well as place bait stations.
    - Ask neighbors (see next page) for recommendations, and check the company’s licensing at <https://www.dec.ny.gov/nyspad/wicket/page?1>
- If using traps, instant-kill snap traps are more humane than glue traps. Always place snap traps where other small animals (e.g. cats) can’t reach them, such as inside an upside-down milk crate.

# NYC Resources

## NYC's Dept of Health has extensive resources to help residents learn about preventing and combatting rat infestation

- Start here: <https://www1.nyc.gov/site/doh/health/health-topics/rats.page>
- On that page, in the “Home and Community Prevention” section, the second link “[Preventing Rats on your Property](#)” is a good overview of steps to take to make your property less attractive to rats.
- The city offers a 2-hour “Rat Academy” live online training course several times each month. You can find the schedule here: <https://www1.nyc.gov/site/doh/services/rats-control-training.page>
- The city has a map showing which addresses have had rat inspections and/or violations. Contact owners of nearby properties to get tips as to effective integrated pest management companies. You can find the map here: <https://a816-dohbsp.nyc.gov/IndicatorPublic/Rats/>
- Recommendation: DO NOT call 311 to report rat infestation on your own property. Call an integrated pest management company instead. Call 311 only when the owner of an infested property refuses to take appropriate steps to combat the problem. A call to 311 will result in an inspection and potentially a summons if rat activity is found.

# PPUABA “DRAT” Committee

**D**espicable **R**ubbish-Monger **A**ttack **T**eam

## **Volunteer committee of PPUABA residents active in 2019**

- Created a list of conditions conducive to rat infestation
- Surveyed properties on PPUABA blocks to identify those with active infestation or conditions conducive to infestation
- Notified property owners of results found (when possible)
- Could be re-activated if there is sufficient interest and availability of volunteers
- See sample property inspection sheet on following page

# PPUABA “DRAT” Committee

## Property inspection template

PPUBA Despicable Rubbish-Monger Attack Team (DRAT) PROPERTY WORK-UP				Version 3						
HOUSE NUMBER:				DATE:						
OWNER / TENANT:										
CONTACT INFO:										
INSPECTION INFORMATION				RECOMMENDATIONS / REMEDIES						
INSPECTED UNDER STOOP?				Inspected by:						
ACCESS TO REAR AREAS				OK?						
TREE (S) BIO-SWALE?										
EVIDENCE / SEVERITY										
CONDITIONS FOUND		0 - 10	LOCATION	REPAIR HOLES	USE CANS WITH COVERS	ELIMINATE CLUTTER	ELIMINATE VEGETATION	CONTROL OF ELIMINATE	BAITS / TRAPS	UTILIZE
DROPPINGS										
BURROWS										
HOLES:										
STOOP										
STOOP VENT										
FORECOURT										
BUILDING										
HATCH										
SIDEWALK										
FRONT WALL										
CURB										
GNAW MARKS										
RUB MARKS										
CLUTTER										
VEGETATION										
ADJ. BUILDING										
OTHER										
CANS / BAGS / RECEPTACLES										
CANS WITH LIDS										
CANS WITHOUT LIDS										
BAGS ONLY										
WOODEN RECEPTACLES										
REMEDIES EMPLOYED:										
OTHER:										
REINSPECTION DATE										
NOTES / COMMENTS										