



## Message from the Mayor

Among the many essential municipal services provided to the citizens of the City of Chicago by the Department of Streets & Sanitation, one of the most important is rodent control.

Thirty years ago, the city's rodent population was estimated to be more than six million. Four out of every five blocks had some sort of rodent activity.

Thanks to our very aggressive and responsive rodent control program, today, four out of five blocks are virtually rat free and the overall population of these unhealthy and dangerous pests is significantly less than prior years.



A rodent control worker inspects a garbage area. Cans should be closed and the area free of debris.

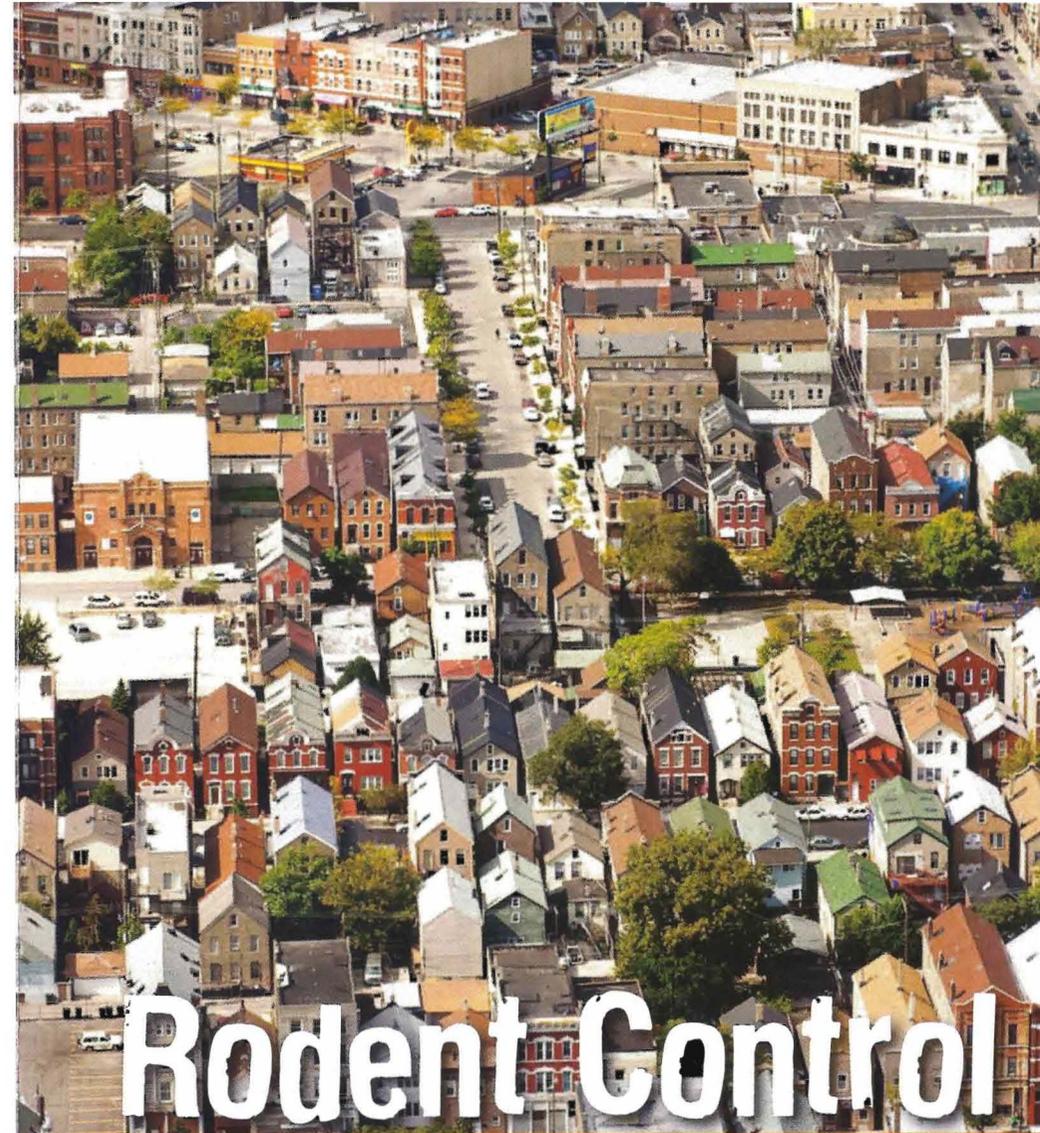
Crews are dispatched to investigate every reported rat sighting. Alley conditions are investigated and damaged carts are replaced. Rodenticide is placed in rat burrows to eradicate the nest.

But for all their efforts, the men and women of the Department of Streets & Sanitation need the cooperation of residents to keep alleys rat free. You can help by making sure your trash is properly contained. Exposed garbage is the primary reason rodents proliferate. When garbage carts are securely closed, rats will eat the rodenticide and die.

If you see a rat or notice conditions that may contribute to rodent activity, don't hesitate. Call the City at 311. Working together, we can continue to eliminate these urban pests.

Sincerely,

Richard M. Daley  
Mayor



# Rodent Control

## GET HELP FROM CITY HALL

The City of Chicago provides a variety of services, which can help you and your neighbors rid your block of rats. For these services call 311 for assistance.

- Damaged garbage carts will be replaced.
- Bureau of Rodent Control workers will bury an effective rodenticide deep in burrows, to kill them where they live.
- Dilapidated garages or sheds can be demolished by the city.
- A representative from the Bureau of Rodent Control is available to attend a meeting of your block committee or other community organization.
- Bureau of Rodent Control can also provide advice on how to eliminate rats inside buildings and how to keep them out.
- Tickets and fines will be issued for garbage, junk, and debris accumulations or any other condition which may contribute to a rat problem on your block.



## What YOU need to Know What YOU need to DO



City of Chicago  
Richard M. Daley, Mayor

**STREETS & SANITATION**



Department of  
Streets & Sanitation  
Thomas G. Byrne, Commissioner

# Winning the War Against Rats

Like so many other cities throughout the world, Chicago was once infested with rats. Unlike many other cities, Chicago reacted by mounting a systematic attack on the rat problems thanks to a very aggressive rodent control program.

There is no magic in the success of Chicago's rat control program. The Department of Streets & Sanitation's Bureau of Rodent Control workers work block by block eliminating pest infestations using a variety of techniques. But these efforts cannot succeed without the full participation and cooperation of the residents who live on those blocks.

Mayor Richard M. Daley continues to lead the City's increasingly effective rat control program by implementing several major strategies:

The Bureau of Rodent Control's abatement program is a multi-pronged attack on their food sources and breeding places in residential neighborhoods.

Mayor Daley's Dumpster Task Force vigorously enforces ordinances against overflowing dumpsters and food establishment sanitary codes in commercial areas.

The Bureau of Rodent Control utilizes an "Integrated Pest Management" (IPM) approach to rat control. Elements of the IPM process include inspection, monitoring, sanitation, exclusion and chemical control when necessary.

Encourage everyone on your block to join together against rats. You can get additional copies of this brochure by calling 311 or online at [www.cityofchicago.org/streetsandsan](http://www.cityofchicago.org/streetsandsan)

## HOW YOU CAN RAT-PROOF YOUR PROPERTY

### ORGANIZE WITH YOUR NEIGHBORS

Encourage everyone on your block to join together against rats. You can get additional copies of this brochure by calling 311 or online at [www.cityofchicago.org/streetsandsan](http://www.cityofchicago.org/streetsandsan).

### FIND AND CORRECT THE GARBAGE PROBLEMS

Eliminate rodent breeding places and sources of food from your block. Some of the more common examples include:

- Garbage carts, cans or bins so full the lids won't close
- Plastic bags of garbage not in a cart or bin
- Dog feces left for more than a day
- Fruits and vegetables left rotting in gardens
- Overfilled outside pet food dishes and bird feeders
- Junk, old cars, tires, lumber and debris that offer hiding places for rats.

Even one yard with a food source or hiding place can cause rat problems for the entire block. If one or more of the households on your block won't cooperate, call 311 and ask the Department of Streets and Sanitation to send an inspector into your neighborhood to enforce the City's Sanitation Code.

### RAT-PROOF TIPS

- Rid outdoor areas of old lumber, brick piles, junk autos, old equipment or any other debris that potentially shelters rats.
- If you need to store any of the above materials, place them at least 18 inches above ground (or floor) level and at least one foot away from any wall or fence.
- Look for holes in pavement or walls.
- For larger openings, it may be necessary to first cover the open area with hardware cloth and then solidify the opening with fresh concrete or blacktop as needed.
- Give careful attention to the exterior doors, making sure any opening between the door and floor is too small for rats and mice to enter (less than three eighths of an inch).
- Loading docks can become harborage when the steel corner plates are loose enough for rodents to squeeze behind them; the hardware cloth method can deny them further entry.
- Any opening should be sealed with hardware cloth so tightly it cannot easily be removed; then cement over the opening with fresh concrete mix.
- Another common rat harborage area is the small easement space between two adjoining buildings that runs between the street and the alley. Often this space is too narrow for a person to walk through, making it more secure for rats to set up housekeeping. Both property owners should work together to anchor a strip of sheet metal connecting the property walls from ground level to a height of at least ten feet. This metal can be pre-colored, particularly on the street side, to complement the appearance of the buildings.
- For larger easement openings which often house air conditioners or other exterior equipment, a tightly sealed metal locked door with a concrete threshold at each end will deny rats access to this space.

## REMEMBER, IF RATS CAN'T FEED, THEY CAN'T BREED!

Even one yard with a food source or hiding place can cause rat problems for an entire block.



Contain garbage and help cut off a rat's food supply



Clean up after your dog



Dispose all waste into a sealed cart



Put away pet food promptly.



Clean up old tires and cars, lumber or any other debris and junk.



Did you know that a rat can crawl through holes the size of quarter? Cover larger holes with hardware cloth (top bar and bottom corner) and then concrete or blacktop as needed.

## FACTS ABOUT RATS

The species of rat found in Chicago is the Norway rat. The name is rather misleading as this species originated in Asia centuries ago.

The rat has an average life span of six to twelve months. Beginning at the age of two to three months, a female rat can produce four to seven litters per year with each litter containing eight to twelve pups. Females can become impregnated within 48 hours after giving birth. The number, size and survivability of litters produced depends upon the amount of food and shelter available.

They prefer fresh food, but will eat many things such as pet food, dog feces, garbage and plants. If food is scarce, the strongest rats may even eat the weakest and young.

Norway rats prefer to live in burrows in the ground. They are excellent climbers and swimmers and most active at night. They have very hard teeth and can chew through wood and plaster or any other material that is softer than their teeth. They can crawl through holes the size of a quarter, tread water for three days and land unharmed after a five-story fall.

Norway rats live in colonies that have very well defined territories. The strongest colonies get the best places to live.

The risk of disease being spread from rats to humans is very real. By their very nature, rats carry a variety of potentially infected fleas and ticks which may be passed on to people. In rare occurrences, especially when cornered, rats can bite humans or pets.