

Rat Abatement Special Edition

Dear Neighbor,

Over the last several years, Knettishall Community Association in partnership with Baltimore County Code Enforcement has requested and received several rate abatement sweeps through our neighborhood. Despite these efforts, our community continues to have pockets of rat infestation. If you see any home with active rat infestations, you must call Baltimore County Code Enforcement, at 410.887.3351 to report unsanitary or out of compliance conditions to Code Enforcement. **KCA has only a limited number of volunteers and we cannot sweep the entire neighborhood every weekend.** We as a community have a choice to either combat the conditions that lead to rat infestations or to live with vermin that spread disease and destroy property. **See something, say something!** Signs will be posted for the next Baltimore County Rat Abatement Sweep.

1. **Be Aware.** Inspect your property regularly for signs of rodent activity.
2. **Be neat.** Keep your yard free of trash, debris, high grass or accumulations of building supplies. If you must store materials or equipment outside do so neatly. Organizing and/or elevating stored items helps to reduce harborage and allows you to inspect under and around them more easily.
3. **Don't feed the Rats.** You may not realize that pet food, pet waste, open garbage cans or cans without tight fitting lids or bags of garbage, bird seed or other food scraps left outside are an open invitation for rats to visit you and establish a home in your yard. Never put household garbage or food scraps in compost piles.
4. **Cut off their water supply.** Dump pails, unused flower pots, toys or equipment in which water can accumulate (standing water also provides a breeding area for mosquitos during the summer months).
5. **Protect your home.** Close any holes you find in the foundation of your house, eliminate cavities under steps, sidewalks, or porches. Close threshold gaps at exterior doors. Provide a heavy one fourth inch mesh screen over sump pump outlets or a tight fitting lid on your sump pump well.
6. **Think about your own activities.** Be sure to clean up any outside eating areas. Minimize spillage around the bbq grill. Greasy residue on a patio or porch or food residue allowed to build up on cooking equipment may attract rodents for extended periods of time. The feeding of wild animals such as birds and squirrels must cease and vegetable gardens or even fruit trees may have to be removed for rodent abatement measures to be effective.
7. **Don't build in problems.** Try to utilize construction methods that minimize or eliminate crawl spaces under decks or sheds. If building low to the ground is unavoidable utilize heavy one fourth inch wire mesh to close perimeter gaps. Remember rats can slip through spaces of one half an inch and are energetic diggers. Wire mesh should extend below ground at least 1 foot to deter tunneling.
8. **Communicate.** Talk to your family and your neighbors. They may not realize that a problem exists. Rodent infestations must be addressed by everyone if they are to be successfully controlled or eliminated.
9. **Fight the Rat.** When you see a rat, rat run, or rat burrow, take action immediately. The problem won't just go away. Fill in the burrow to see if it is reopened, indicating an on going infestation. You should take measures to exterminate the existing population. Many bait station or trap products are available at local hardware and lawn and garden stores. You may wish to utilize a certified professional pest control operator.

(Courtesy: Baltimore County Code Enforcement)

Know the Enemy!

Where do rats live?

The most common rat responsible for residential infestations is the Norway Rat. These rodents prefer to live underground in burrows. These burrows are most often made alongside building structures, fence lines walkways patios sheds and under low decks.



What do they look like?

Adult Norway rats are 12 to 18 inches long with a tail 5 to 8 inches long. Their fur is brown to reddish gray on their upper back and grayish white on the belly. They are heavy set with a sparsely haired tail, blunt nose, and short ears. Feces are capsule shaped and up to three fourths of an inch long.

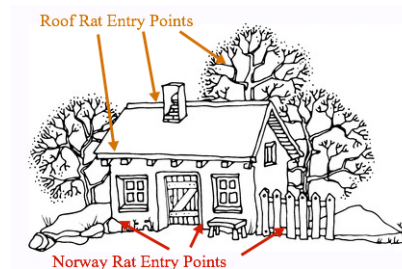


How long do they live and how often do they breed?

Rats typically live about 1 year, although they may survive longer, and females may have four to seven litters of young per year. Litters range from six to 12 with a total of about 30 young expected to live to maturity per year.

What are their Habits?

Norway rats typically live in burrows which are 12 to 18 inches below ground and under 3 feet in length. Burrow openings are three to 10 inches in diameter, roughly dug, with openings usually angled towards a sheltered area. There are typically clearly defined paths or "rat runs" leading to the burrow openings. Rats will travel up to 150 feet to find a source of food. They are omnivorous or will eat their young if the need arises. They tend to grow in population in direct relation to the available food supply.



How does this affect the public?

Rats can destroy and contaminate food supplies. Rodent feces and urine are a source of gastrointestinal diseases such as Salmonellosis or E-coli infections, and respiratory diseases such as Hantavirus. The rat flea has been an important agent of

transmission for Bubonic Plague and Murine Typhus.

(Courtesy: Baltimore County)

Nuisance Properties

Thanks to the efforts of the Knettishall Citizens on Patrol and Baltimore County Code Enforcement and Police we are doing pretty well as a community, however there remain several properties which can be classified as "Nuisance Properties" in accordance with Baltimore County Code § 35-6-110.1. KCA can assist in dealing with these properties. It is critical however that if you are having persistent, flagrant and dangerous problems with a rented property, you MUST CALL 911 and demand a report to be taken by the police regarding each incident. If a rental property has 3 incidents in 6 months, the landlord stands to lose their rental registration license and the tenants will be evicted. This is largely the only way these problems can be dealt with but there must be police reports on file.

KCA can and will assist you in dealing with nuisance properties. For more information or to begin a nuisance complaint, email knettishalltowson@gmail.com

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