

# Helping Prevent Rats on Your Property

*A Guide for Property Owners and Tenants*



**Reading**  
Borough Council

Working better with you

*The Prevention of Damage by Pests Act 1949 is clear that the responsibility for dealing with rats falls to the land owner, so it is essential owners take responsibility and understand that any enforcement action will be taken against them if they fail to manage their land appropriately.*

## **What Reading Borough Council can do:**

- Provide information and advice on rats to residents.
- In some cases, take enforcement action where we have evidence of rats on private land that owners are failing to deal with.
- Continue with street cleaning to reduce environmental food sources on the highway.
- Advise residents on waste management and recycling and monitor the area to ensure compliance with waste legislation.
- Work with Thames Water to ensure that any issues relating to their network are resolved.
- Resolve issues on Council land.

## **What Reading Borough Council can't do:**

- Access all properties in the area and carry out proofing works or treatments.
- Carry out an open public area baiting programme due to issues of access and risks of secondary poisoning to non-target species.
- Survey private drains without the owner requesting this as a paid for service.
- Rectify land use issues outside the Council's control.

# Signs of Rats

## Droppings

Rat droppings are around 2cm (3/4") long and cigar shaped. If they're moist and dark it's a sign that rats are in the area.

## Damage

Rats gnaw constantly and cause damage to belongings, structures, pipes and electric cables as well as food packets. This damage can cause electrical fires, problems with drainage systems and even subsidence.

## Runways

Rats run along the same path many times and leave black, greasy marks.

## Holes

Rats live in burrows with entry and exit holes 5-7cm wide. If the hole is smooth and shiny it could be an active burrow. The holes could be under bushes or plants. They can also nest in roof spaces and upper floors of buildings.

# Preventing Rats

## Use Your Wheeled Bin

Dispose of waste food in your wheeled bin and make sure you can close the lid. Do not leave it lying around in bags or sacks.

## Compost Bins

Only put garden and uncooked vegetable waste on compost heaps. Either put them on a hard surface or use wire netting underneath to stop rats



Rats can be found anywhere that offers shelter, food and water. The rat is physically strong, can jump up to three metres and can squeeze through a hole the size of a coin at night but you may see them searching for food and water during the day in areas under hedges and sheds where they dig shallow burrows and make nests in wall cavities and beneath

Soil vent pipe  
not capped

Control climbing  
plants

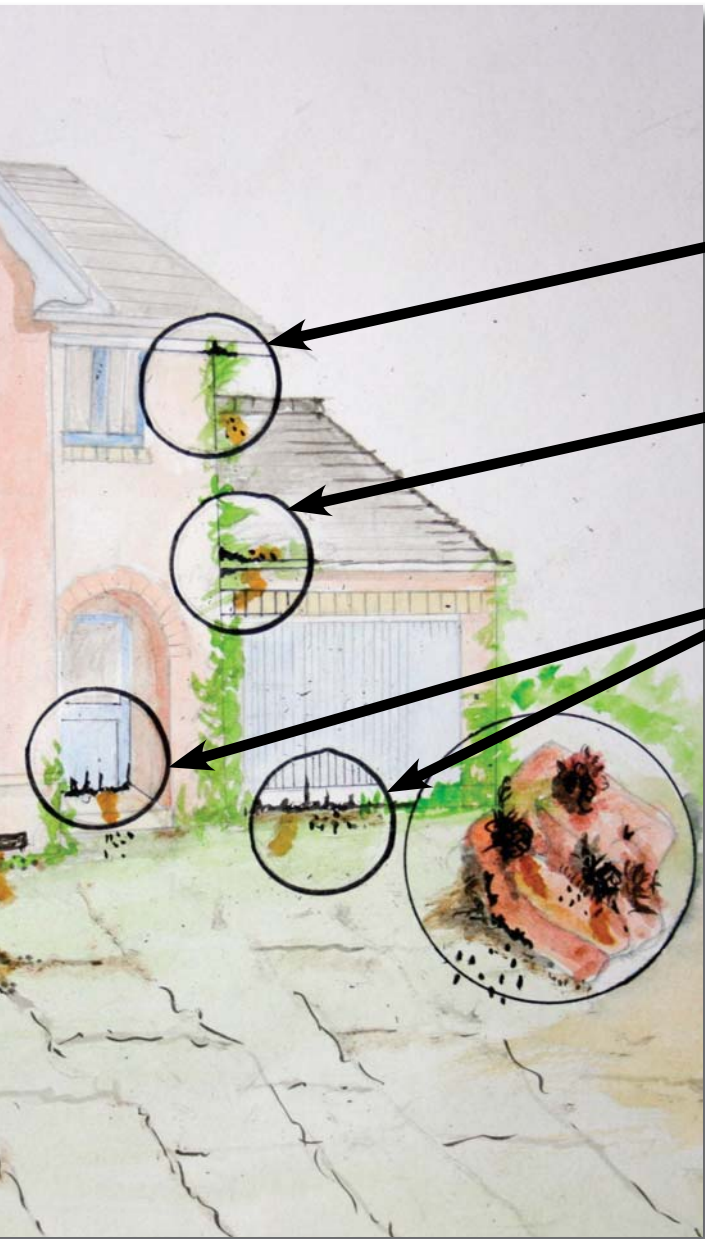
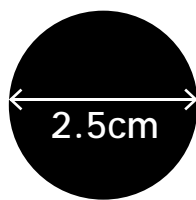
Gnaw marks on  
rubbish sacks

Broken vent

Rat  
droppings



most common species within the UK is the common or brown rat which  
ough a gap of less than 2.5cm. They are mainly active at  
ay. They are efficient burrowers and like compost heaps  
make nests with dry grass and leaves. In houses they nest  
n floorboards.



Damage to the eaves

Keep gutters clear

Gnaw and rub marks at entry points



burrowing inside.

## Get Rid of Clutter

Remove rubbish, piles of wood and garden waste where rats could make a nest.

## Control Weeds, Shrubs and Bushes

Keep your garden tidy and clear overgrown areas. Cut tree branches so they do not overhang your property. Wall climbing plants should be trimmed and not allowed to reach from ground to roof level.

## Close Old Burrows

An inactive burrow will have leaves, cobwebs or other debris around the entrance. Close these holes so rats can't get back in. Fill holes in the garden with soil and pressing it down. Close holes in walls with cement.

## Bird Feeding/Pet Food

Rats will eat bird and pet food so make sure you keep food off the ground. If feeding wild birds use suspended wire feeders with attached waste trays and only put out enough food for the day. Clear away spilled bird or pet food immediately.

## Building Work

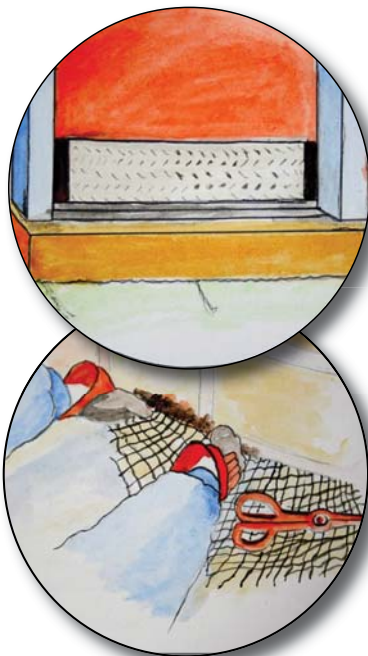
If you are building an extension or conservatory ensure good workmanship as unfinished or poor workmanship can provide a perfect access for rats.

## Maintain Your Property

Keep your property in good repair. To ensure a rat infestation in your garden



does not enter your home you should repair any external structural faults. Seal holes around pipes with wire wool and fill with cement or expanding foam. Damaged or old air vents with holes bigger than 2.5cm should be replaced, repaired or covered with fine mesh - make sure you don't block them though. Gaps under external doors should be blocked with draught excluding brushes or bristle strips or the threshold raised. Check your drainage is in good repair as rats can access the house via broken pipe work.



## Surrounding Areas

Report any local refuse issues or flytipping to the Council. Report local businesses who have overflowing bins or who don't clear the rubbish their business or customers create.

You can use our 'Love Clean Reading' app or fill out a form on our website: [www.reading.gov.uk/streetcare](http://www.reading.gov.uk/streetcare).



## Control Measures

If you already have rats you may need to consider hiring professional help.

### Rat Baiting

We do not recommend you use over the counter bait as it is less effective than that used by pest controllers and may simply provide a food source for the rats.

We strongly advise you use a professional pest control service such as those accredited by BASIS PROMPT, British Pest Control Association (BPCA) or National Pest Technicians Association (NPTA).

A good company should:

- Give you a written inspection report and an action plan.
- Offer advice for structural repair, if required.
- Visit as regularly as required.
- Put bait in tamper-resistant containers.
- Employ qualified, well-trained exterminators.
- Educate you on how to prevent rats.

## Work Together

- Walk around with the pest control professional during each visit, and keep track of work.
- Agree on a service plan and cost.
- Follow-up on referrals and recommendations.

## Reading Borough Council Pest Control Service

We offer a pest control service for rats and mice in domestic premises for a charge.

**Before contacting Reading Borough Council have you...**

- Instructed an accredited pest controller
- Carried out pest proofing works
- Made sure household waste is secured in closed lidded bins
- Made sure bird food is removed at night
- Talked with neighbours to work to resolve the problem

## Contact the Pest Control Team

0118 937 3787

## Report Flytipping

0118 937 3787

or use our online form at [www.reading.gov.uk/streetcare](http://www.reading.gov.uk/streetcare) or download the 'Love Clean Reading' app.



**Download this FREE app**

and report things like graffiti, fly tipping & litter to the Council



Available on the iPhone App Store