

LOS ANGELES UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT

PEST OF THE MONTH PROGRAM No. 31

PREVENTING RATS AND MICE FROM INVADING SCHOOLS AND OTHER DISTRICT BUILDINGS.

Rats and mice often invade schools and other District buildings to look for food, water, and shelter. Once inside structures, these animals often chew on many materials such as food, food containers, books, cardboard, paper, paper products, plastic bags, art projects, and electrical wires, etc. Some of these materials are gnawed on because they are food while others are shredded for nesting materials. Rats and mice also create potential health hazards by dropping body hairs, urinating, and defecating where they live, nest, and travel. Unwanted odors from their urine, droppings, and body grease are often detected in rodent infested areas. Rodents that live in close association with people can transmit several diseases and aggravate allergies. Rats and mice often harbor fleas, mites, and ticks that can bite people and cause skin dermatitis, etc.

WHAT YOU CAN DO TO PREVENT RODENT PROBLEMS

TEACHERS

- Permit food and beverages in designated areas only.
- Make sure that trash and food debris are disposed promptly and properly.
- Minimize clutter in the classroom. Excessive storage in the classroom provides ideal harborage for rodents. Throw away unwanted and unneeded materials.
- Store materials in sturdy plastic boxes with tight fitting lids.
- To the utmost extent possible, do not keep pets and pet foods in the classrooms.
- Handle and store edible art materials (beans, elbow macaroni, rice, etc.) properly.
- Ask students to remove food from lockers, cubbies, and desks daily.
- Ask students not to stuff candy bar wrappers and chip bags in small holes in walls etc.
- Always remind students to dispose of their trash in trash containers both indoors and out. Everyone needs to help to keep the schools clean and free of trash.

FOOD SERVICE STAFF

- Clean floors, counters, cabinets, and tables promptly every day.
- Empty indoor trash cans and remove garbage at the end of each day.

Kitchen

- Store and seal food waste in plastic bags before removal.
- Clean food-soiled dishes, utensils, appliances, cabinets, shelving, walls, and other food surfaces at the end of each day.

Food-receiving and storage areas.

- Inspect all incoming materials and reject anything that is infested, show signs of infestation, wet, leaking, or contaminated.

- Do not store materials in cardboard boxes. Remove materials from cardboard boxes and place them on wire racks off the floor. Avoid storing anything on the floor.
- Store materials in pest proof containers.

CUSTODIAL/MAINTENANCE STAFF

Indoors

- Caulk, seal, screen, patch all entry points around electrical conduits, pipes, pipe chases, drain cleanout accesses, etc. Remember that mice can squeeze through a hole a ¼ inch in diameter (the size of a dime) and rats can go through a hole ½ inch in diameter (the size of a quarter).
- Weatherstrip exterior doors and windows.
- Keep indoor trash in lined containers and empty these containers daily. Do not leave food trash indoors overnight or over the weekend.

Outdoors

- Empty outdoor trash containers daily. Make sure you have liners in trash containers.
- Wash out outdoor trash containers regularly.
- Do not let trash spill over the containers.
- Designate someone to pick up candy bar wrappers, chip bags, and other food containers that may be on school grounds daily.
- **EMPTY GARBAGE CONTAINERS IN OUTDOOR LUNCH AREAS IMMEDIATELY AFTER LUNCH AND REMOVE ANY FOOD DEBRIS ON THE GROUND.** This will deny pigeons, sparrows, and seagulls prolonged access to food debris in the lunch area.
- All trash placed in dumpsters must be in liner bags. Tie the top of the bags to deny birds and rats easy access to food inside.
- **EXCEPT WHEN DISPOSING OF TRASH IN THE DUMPSTERS, THE LIDS ON THE DUMPSTERS MUST BE KEPT CLOSED AT ALL TIMES. This is a major problem at many schools that needs to be rectified.**

GROUNDS STAFF

- Pick up and remove trash from grounds daily. Scraps of food on/in wind-blown candy bar wrappers and chip bags, etc. serve as food for birds, rodents, ants, and cockroaches.
- Check all your irrigation systems. Shut off unneeded sprinkler heads. Adjust sprinklers to make sure you are not over-watering. Unnecessary puddles created by over-irrigation are sources of water for pest birds and rodents as well as breeding sites for mosquitoes that carry West Nile Virus.
- Where possible, thin out or eliminate dense ground covers such as ivy that creates perfect rodent hiding areas.
- Use string trimmers and other devices to remove weeds.

THINK PREVENTION WHEN DEALING WITH RODENTS

REMEMBER!!!

YOU CAN HELP TO PREVENT RODENT PROBLEMS BY DOING THE FOLLOWING:-

- **Don't let them eat.**
- **Don't let them drink.**
- **Don't let them come in.**
- **Don't let them hide out.**

EXCLUSION

The best and permanent way to keep rodents out of buildings is to rodent-proof the structure. Caulk, seal, screen, and patch all possible entry points to deny them access. Use ¼ inch hardware cloth to exclude both mice and rats. Install door sweeps on exterior doors.

SANITATION

Deny then access to food. Keep the school clean and free of food debris, food trash, food wrappers, and other food associated materials. Allow food consumption in designated areas only.

WATER

Do not allow over-irrigation and excessive hosing-off to provide pest birds and rodents with water daily.

STORAGE

Get unwanted exterior miscellaneous storage materials off school grounds. These provide excellent hide-out areas for rats and mice.

GOOD SOURCES OF INFORMATION ON RATS AND MICE

Los Angeles Unified School District web site at

<http://www.laschools.org/employee/mo/ipm/#pom> has a lot of useful information pertaining to pest issues. LAUSD Pest of the Month Program No. 1 entitled: Commensal rodents has more in-depth information on rats and mice.

Good, unbiased information on rats and mice can be found at

<http://www.ipm.ucdavis.edu> When you get to this site, click on homes, structures, people, and pets. Scroll down to Vertebrate pests, then click on House Mouse or Rats as needed. Pest Notes #7483 and #74106 are about mice and rats.

Attached are the 3 pictures that go with Pest of the Month Program 31. 8349 is a picture of a house mouse, 8352 is a picture of a roof rat, and 8355 is a diagram of a rat squeezing through a hole.

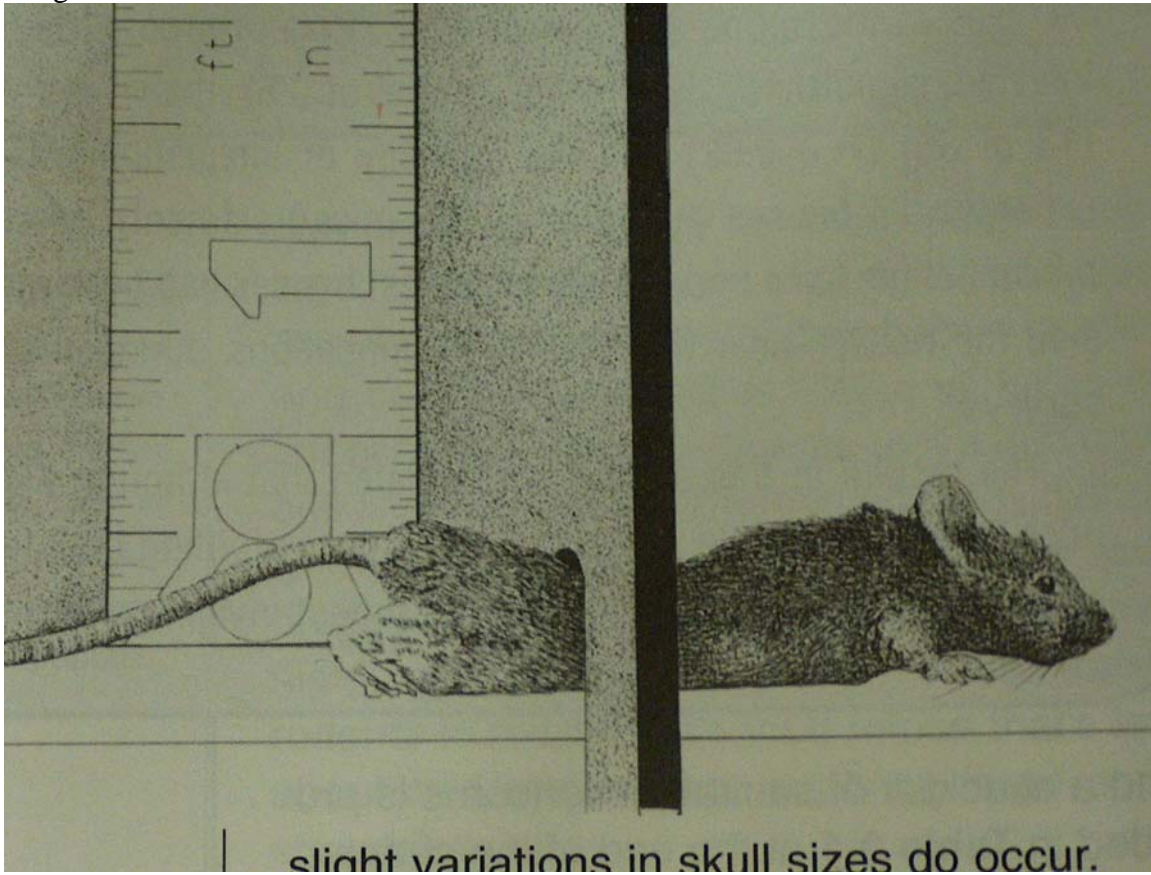
Image 8349



Image 8352



Image 8355



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