

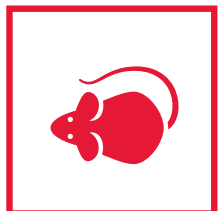
7 TIPS

TO IMPROVE YOUR
RODENT INSPECTION SKILLS



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THE RODENT POPULATION IS AT AN ALL-TIME HIGH

and with that brings a growing business opportunity for pest control companies. However, far too many pros take narrow approaches to rodent inspection work. They get stuck in patterns. They may rely on the same bait types; their trap placements are methodical and based on what's commonly assumed and heard about rodent behaviors and tendencies.

Rodents, however, are adaptable and smart. Keeping an open mind and keen eye is key to getting rodent inspections right. Pest control professionals know that tired inspection approaches can lead to callbacks, unhappy customers and lost profits. Here are seven tips for improving your rodent inspection skills today to help reduce the likelihood of costly callbacks tomorrow.

TIP #1 Know the intruder, evaluate the big picture first.



Far too often, a pest control professional is too quick to start placing traps. Take the time to assess the rodent patterns in place. Rats and mice are secretive mammals and behave a lot like criminals. They avoid the light and duck away from interaction with other mammals, like humans.

YOU CAN START BY LOOKING AT THE MACRO LEVEL DETAILS

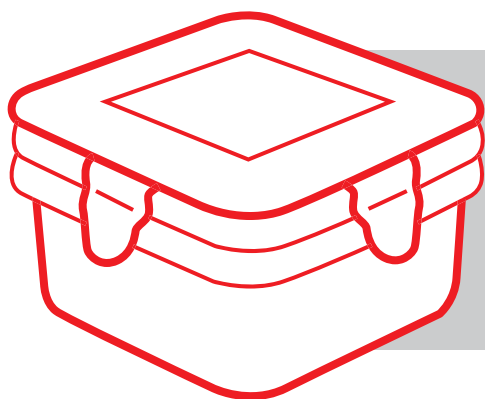
- Holes near cabinets or closets
- Holes around windows
- Sinks
- Missing screens and vents
- Foundation cracks

These are just a few of the common rodent entry points. Then, don't forget to assess the exterior of the home. That compost heap or bush close to the home, stacked firewood, clusters of plants and bushes, these are all forms of shelter for a rodent. Above all, remember that mice and rats are adaptable. Sewer Rats will climb onto a roof with the help of a trellis. Roof Rats will get into a sewer. And rats or mice will find ways to hole up in the inner workings of a meat freezer to seek out food, which leads us to the second tip.



TIP #2 Seek out food sources

Rodents need to eat and drink, just like humans do, and finding food and water is likely the primary driver for them entering your home. Watch for bowls of pet food around the house, open trash containers and even open bags of rice or other grains.



EVEN IF THESE ARE NOT THE PRIMARY REASON FOR THE INFESTATION, INFORM THE CUSTOMER THAT THESE THINGS SHOULD BE CLEANED AND STORED AWAY PROPERLY.

TIP #3 Watch for and understand sebum trails



There is no one standard for rodent control. Some argue rats and mice don't see well, therefore, they like to scurry along walls. That's not always the case. The first rat in a home or office leaves behind critical pheromones, then the team of rodents behind them leave a trail of skin oil, or sebum, as they continue to move along a certain pathway repeatedly.

You can find sebum trails anywhere, along the floor, on pipes, walls and ceilings. This is the highway rodents have built on the inside or outside of a building. And it's not uncommon to see the trails going from entry points, like holes and missing screens, to a food or water source.

In addition, rats are indeed linear creatures, so once they find a line to something they are looking for, they'll follow it. Again, it can be along walls, floors or along pipes inside walls. Sebum is the big giveaway, and there's no limit to the types of places you can find it.



TIP #4 Embrace technology

Today, there are a variety of remote sensors and cameras, infrared as well, that can be set up to monitor environments and track rodent behavior. If you want greater insight into the type of rodent you are dealing with or just simply want more proof, catching them in the act along a suspected trail with camera and sensor technology will help you do just that. If you've been a good observer, the added information these tools can bring may help you better understand the habits of the rodents and better inform your approach to setting traps and selecting bait.

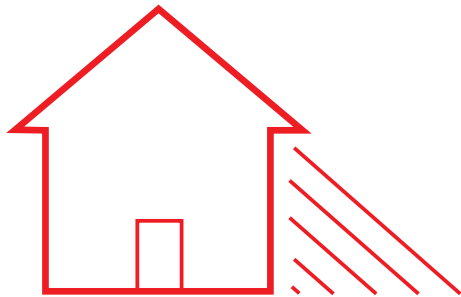
The EZ Square Rat is a stand-alone Wi-Fi snap trap system that allows the PMP to install the device in 60 seconds or less anywhere with a Wi-Fi connection or hotspot.



Electronic rodent monitoring devices can be used to track heavily infested areas. They are excellent to use in hard to get to areas (i.e. drop ceilings, rafters, deep in a crawl space, etc.). ERM gives you the ability to create a trend analysis report when using these devices for commercial accounts. This type of info can help sell the point that a problem area needs to be excluded or food might need to be put in metal containers or pallets lifted off the floor are a few examples.

TIP #5

Be smart about bait use and trap placement



TRAPS SHOULD BE PLACED IN SHADED AREAS ALONG SEBUM TRAILS.

Back to that misconception about rodents running along walls—making this inaccurate conclusion will poorly inform your trap placement strategy, too. There are general guidelines some technicians assume that are dangerous to adhere to, like spreading traps 25 to 50 feet apart for rats and eight to 12 feet for mice. So, placing traps along a wall at a certain arbitrary or assumed-to-be-correct distance from one another is amateur work.

Go back to the behavior and biology you've learned from your observations and technology (if used). Once you find those sebum highways, traps should be set along them. If you're going to vary distance, place them in shaded areas (where rodents prefer to travel) along the trail. A trap set out in light is a wasted resource.

Visit your account after bait has been applied in less than 7 days. That way you know how much has been consumed and can address those feeding habits by adding more bait placements if needed.

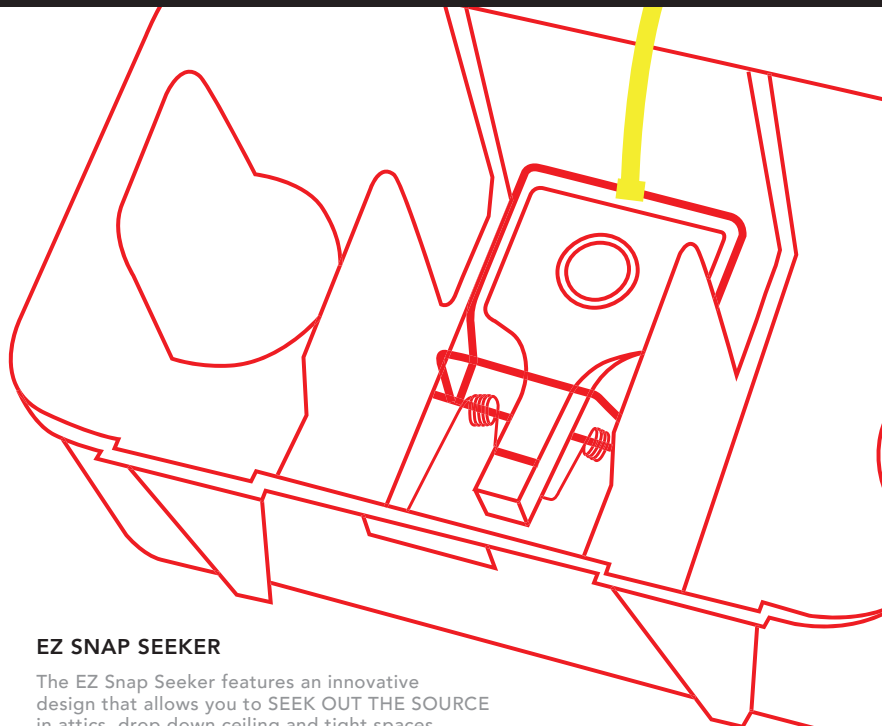


TIP #6

Weigh glue traps versus snap traps

Some professionals make decisions on personal preferences, and that's another mistake. Snap traps work well in corners, especially if shaded. Shaded corners are comfort areas for rats and with the right type of bait in a snap trap in these environments, you could see good results. Glue traps, however, work best along the sebum trails. Don't waste them by placing them in corners.

Use some type of nesting materials instead of an oily attractant. Oil breaks down snap traps in hot areas and weakens glue. Something as simple as using a cotton ball or dental floss is all you need. Female rodents are always looking for nesting material. Snap traps that are secured in a rodent station are 50% more effective due to the recoil of snap trap.



EZ SNAP SEEKER

The EZ Snap Seeker features an innovative design that allows you to SEEK OUT THE SOURCE in attics, drop down ceiling and tight spaces.

TIP #7 Other clues



When doing your initial inspection, consider a few other details. A rat or mouse infestation will likely have a lot of hair. If that's not the case, it may be a different type of infestation. In addition, watch for bite marks on cardboard boxes. The size of the bite may cue which type of rodent you're dealing with. A 2-mm bite tends to be a mouse, while a 4-mm bite mark is more likely to be a rat. And any box that has been left closed for a period of time is fair game for a rodent home. So, be careful and be aware.

A FINAL WORD

Effective rodent inspections require common sense, a slower approach and an openness to finding details that are different from what we may have known in the past about rats and mice. Looking only for droppings and large holes that suggest pathways of entry are only baseline methods to examine and assess a situation.

On the business side of pest control, there can sometimes be an emphasis on getting jobs done quickly. When it comes to performing a quality rodent inspection that truly solves the customer's problems, a hasty approach will likely only lead to increased call-back volumes and lost revenue.



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