

## Mice Advice Leaflet – Rodent Control

Mice are a worldwide pest, and research has shown that when in close proximity to humans they can transmit diseases and cause structural damage to properties and services such as electricity supplies. This advice sheet aims to provide you with information on the following:

1. A description of what a mouse may look like.
2. Problems linked to mice.
3. What mice eat.
4. What signs to look out for.
5. What can be done to control/prevent mice.

Picture of a House Mouse



(Picture courtesy of Sorex Ltd)

### 1. Description

The House Mouse (*mus domesticus*) lives and breeds in houses, buildings and other structures such as garages, garden sheds, and outbuildings, which all offer them shelter and protection from the cold and wet weather, and adequate food and water sources. Look out for the following features:

- They have a brownish-grey appearance.
- They have good hearing, but poor eyesight.
- Their size (including the tail) can range from approximately 10 – 20cm / 4 – 8 inches.
- They normally live between 10 – 24 months.
- They are capable of producing between 5 – 10 litters per year, with about 4 – 8 young per litter.

### 2. Problems linked to mice

Mice have been known to spread the following diseases:

- Salmonella and Listeria – which lead to food poisoning and tummy bugs.
- Worms – this leads to poor health.
- Cryptosporidia and Toxoplasma – which cause diarrhoea.

### 3. What mice eat

Mice will eat almost anything, including candle wax and window putty. However, they prefer to eat cereal based foods, and show a particular liking for grass seed and canary seed.

### 4. What to look out for

Mice tend to live indoors, in places such as lofts, under floors, or in wall cavities. Look out for the following:

- Damage to packets of food, electrical cables, woodwork, and shredded paper/plastic which is often used for nesting.
- Footprints may be found in dust or flour.
- Droppings are approximately 6mm long and resemble small, slim pieces of brown rice. They are likely to be found in and around stored food products and food preparation areas. Because of this, it is important to regularly check kitchens and cupboards.
- Gnawed holes in skirting boards.

- Scratching noises in the wall cavities and across the ceiling.
- Smears along surfaces. Mice produce these smears by continually rubbing their greasy fur against surfaces.

## 5. What can be done to control/prevent mice

There are 2 main methods for killing mice: poisoning and trapping. Although willing to offer free advice on request, the Pest Control section does not provide a treatment service for mice. Residents of Birmingham can obtain free mouse poison from any of the Councils Neighbourhood Offices.

### Poisons

Mice are erratic feeders, which means that to be successful a large number of baiting points are needed throughout an infested area, preferably 1 metre apart and containing 10 – 30grams of bait. If poison is used, it is essential that baiting points are located in dry places and are fully protected from access by children, pets, or other animals.

Importantly, do not expect instant results as it can take 3 – 10 days for mice to die after eating the poison. **Always read the instructions on the label and use the poison as directed.**

### Trapping

Traps should be placed alongside solid objects such as walls. To begin with, place bait on the trap but do not set the trap until mice have been feeding from the bait for a few days.

Whether poisoning or trapping you must regularly inspect and replace any missing bait.

To prevent infestations/re-infestations, and to improve the effectiveness of the poison/traps, it is essential that good hygiene and proofing be carried out;

- Any areas where evidence of mice is found must be free from all food sources.
- Regular and thorough cleaning of food equipment such as cookers, fridge/freezers and microwaves is required to remove any food debris and spillages.
- Stored foods such as packet food, fruit and vegetables should be positioned where mice cannot feed on them, and if necessary place them in air tight or metal containers to prevent access.
- It is also important to proof effectively, i.e. block holes and gaps that mice may use. Mice can squeeze through gaps of about 1cm in diameter, so holes about as small as a 1pence piece need to be filled.
- Look for gaps under doors, use brush or bristle strips.