



Wildlife Proofing for Mice

Contact the Department of Health or your primary care physician for the latest information on disease concerns and control. Special care should be taken for high-risk individuals, such as the elderly, pregnant or young children.

Safety tips (for contact with mice, their droppings, urine, or nest materials)

1. Wear rubber gloves and a proper respirator.
2. Ventilate the area, if possible.
3. Don't stir up dust by vacuuming or sweeping. The dust could contain hantaviruses, LCM virus, or other airborne disease organisms.
4. Instead, thoroughly wet the materials with a 10% bleach solution (1 part bleach in 9 parts water) or household disinfectant. Wipe up with a damp sponge.
5. Spray dead mice and their nests with disinfectant, then double-bag for disposal.
6. Disinfect toys, silverware, or other items that may have been fouled. Throw away any contaminated foods, drinks, napkins, paper plates, or cups.

Remove artificial food sources (garbage, compost, bird seed, pet food):

1. Store food, birdseed, pet food, garbage, compost, and recyclables in metal, glass, ceramic, or heavy-duty plastic containers.
2. Promptly clean up spills and crumbs.
3. Feed pets at scheduled times, and then put unfinished food in the refrigerator. (Relax, with a proper trapping and exclusion program, you won't have to do this too long).
4. Keep the area around bird feeders clean, especially of spills underneath the feeder.
5. Clean garbage cans, dumpsters, and garbage chutes regularly. Screen dumpster drainage holes with hardware cloth.
6. Elevate compost heaps or enclose with 1/4-inch hardware cloth or welded wire mesh.

Remove their nesting sites:

1. Keep stored items off the floor and away from walls. Keep items away from the walls.
2. Reduce clutter and remove cardboard boxes.
3. Move firewood, debris piles, and garbage cans away from the house.
4. Maintain a foot-wide gravel border around the foundation that's free of vegetation (best), or keep the foundation plantings well-trimmed. Don't stack anything (such as firewood) against the foundation.

Prevent entry into building: (also applies to squirrels)

1. Close the door! (Use screen doors, where applicable, and make sure the door closes snugly. No daylight should be visible around door.)
2. Install door sweeps and weather-stripping.
3. Repair holes in walls and screens. Poke steel wool, wire mesh, or flexible aluminum "gutter guard" into holes then caulk, or spray expanding foam (such as Great Stuff®) over it to strengthen the barrier.
4. Plug gaps around water, gas, and heating pipes, heat registers, air ducts, electrical chases, and false ceilings with latex caulk.
5. For large holes around pipes, use galvanized metal pipe chase covers, sheet metal plates, mortar, plaster of paris, or cement.
6. Seal openings beneath and behind sinks, stoves, and dishwashers with latex caulk.
7. Check vents (sewer, stove, clothes dryers, roof, ridge-line, soffit, furnace ducts, attic fans). If it's damaged or dicey, replace the vent with an animal-proof design, or screen it with 1/4" hardware cloth. End caps on ridge vents may loosen, providing access to the attic. Soffit vents are best protected with metal louvers.
8. White-footed and deer mice are excellent climbers. They will often enter buildings through holes in the roof, even on two- or three-story buildings. Inspect thoroughly.

Trapping strategies:

1. To increase your success, trap intensively for several days after a structure has been sealed. More is better.
2. Place the traps in their runways, in corners, near food sources, nests, or holes—wherever the mice are most active. You may be able to lift some ceiling tiles to place traps in a dropped ceiling. Set traps at night, when mice are most active and check them in the morning.
3. (Note that poisoning mice is strongly recommended against, as this causes secondary poisoning, when an owl or other predator eat the poisoned mouse.)

Live traps:

1. Various models of small cage and box traps, such as Sherman traps.
2. Multiple-capture traps, that shut them into a holding compartment.
3. Set live traps parallel to the wall.
4. Effective bait is peanut butter, chocolate, and gerbil food.
5. Trim a paper cup to one-centimeter high and fill it with water and put it inside the trap, as mice can dehydrate and die while waiting to be released.
6. Traps should be checked regularly.

(Sources include Reference Guide for the National Wildlife Control Organization.)