



*Rodents*

**CITY OF CAMBRIDGE**  
**INTEROFFICE CORRESPONDENCE**

*6 May Albert*

February 28, 2001

To: Robert W. Healy, City Manager

From: Bob Bersani, Inspectional Services

Subject: Response to Council Order #1, dated 1/29/01 RE: Make a presentation to the Council regarding the City's efforts to contain and control the increasing rodent infestation program throughout the City.

In response to this Council Order, the attached Rodent Control Program summary is forwarded.

I am available at your convenience to discuss this program with the Council.

Very truly yours,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "R. R. Bersani".

R. R. Bersani

2/27/01

### Cambridge Rodent Control Program

#### Background:

8/mo.

The Inspectional Services Department receives in excess of 100 complaints annually from Cambridge citizens and businesses relating to rodent activity. When a complaint is received, be it over the counter, a phone call, or in writing, it is entered into the ISD data base, and assigned to an inspector for investigation and follow up action as described below.

We have no studies or accurate data that would reliably indicate that the rodent population across the City is either increasing or decreasing. It is possible, however, that localized road related construction, as well as building demolition and construction projects, could increase rodent activity as their habitat is being disturbed. This could result in a perception that the population is increasing.

#### Construction:

Concerning construction, the Public Works Department includes rodent control provisions in their road and sewer contracts. They also have in place a service contract for dealing with rodent control, baiting, etc. in the public ways and in other public areas and buildings. For demolition of buildings, the demolition contractor is required to have a certification from a qualified pest control contractor that the site has been inspected and baited as necessary and is free of rodents before the demolition permit is issued. For construction projects, the construction contractor is responsible for taking appropriate rodent control measures during construction.

#### Restaurant Inspections:

Restaurants are inspected on a routine basis at least twice annually by ISD. A principal focus of the inspections is evidence of rodent activity, cleanliness of storage and disposal areas, suitability of rodent control plans, and review of pest control reports prepared by the certified pest control contractor. Violations are cited and aggressive action is taken to insure compliance with the State Sanitary Code.

#### Complaints(routine):

Investigation of a routine complaint generally involves a survey of the immediate area for evidence of rodent activity(burrows, droppings, etc.) and violations of the Sanitary Code

## Cambridge Rodent Control Program(cont.)

that could provide harborage or food for rodents(debris, improper trash and garbage storage, etc.). When violations are found, the owner, or responsible party, is cited under the provisions of the State Sanitary Code and a re-inspection scheduled. If the investigation indicates that trapping or eradication is warranted, the person responsible is required to secure the services of a licensed pest control contractor and provide appropriate documentation to the inspector. In those cases where corrective action is not taken or initiated within a reasonable time, a complaint is initiated in accordance with the provisions of the State Sanitary Code with the District Court.

### Area Wide Complaints:

Repeat or numerous complaints from the same area are indicative of an area wide problem. In such situations, ISD will conduct an area wide inspection and solicit the cooperation and involvement of a number of parties in bringing the problem under control. This would typically involve, in addition to area residents and property owners, the Public Works Department, Traffic and Parking Department, MBTA, tenant and neighborhood associations, the School Department, contractors, and restaurants and businesses in the area.

Prior to, or in conjunction with the area wide inspection, ISD would distribute a memo and information packet to all residents and businesses within the area of concern. Actions taken by the City might involve baiting of catch basins and intensive cleaning of public ways and parking lots. Similar actions would be required of private property owners. It should be noted that inspectors do not have the authority to enter private property without the permission of the property owner. This is usually not a problem, however, as all concerned are generally cooperate in these surveys. Area wide problems require continuous monitoring and follow-up over several weeks, or even months, until the problem is brought under control.

Included as Attachment A is a sample of the memo and information packet that is distributed to area residents and business owners when an area wide problem is indicated. In this particular case the area of concern was the Central Square area. Also included under Attachment B, as an example of the kinds of actions that are taken in response to an area wide problem, is a report for Gore, Fulkerson, Binney, and Bent Street, an area of concern this past summer.



See File 2311

# CITY OF CAMBRIDGE

INSPECTIONAL SERVICES DEPARTMENT 831 MASS. AVE.  
CAMBRIDGE, MASSACHUSETTS 02139 (617) 349-6100

ROBERT R. BERSANI  
Commissioner

September 16, 1999

Dear Sir/Madam:

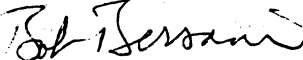
It has come to my attention that there are problems of rodent infestation developing within certain areas of the City, including the Central Square area. An area of particular concern in Central Square is the three block area bounded by Massachusetts Avenue, Main Street, Bishop Allen Drive, and Norfolk Avenue. This is a relatively small area and, therefore, I believe a coordinated approach might be successful in minimizing the rodent problem within this location. As a property owner, I feel certain that you would want to do your part in combating this problem and I earnestly solicit your support and assistance.

Members of my staff have already started conducting a survey of the area to identify specific problem areas and to recommend corrective actions. When they visit your property or facility please cooperate and assist them as much as possible as they are there to assist the community. In the next few weeks, this Department will be coordinating with other city Departments and agencies that may have an impact on the problem and solicit their support as well. Examples include Public Works, Traffic and Parking (City parking lots), MBTA, utility companies, trash haulers, pest control companies, tenant organizations, and of course the tenants themselves. It is clear that without everyone working together it is difficult to have an effective program.

The actions you can take are many and I have attached a brochure provided to me by the City of Boston that I think does a good job summarizing the causes and cures. The most important thing, of course, is to remove their food and water source and the key here is **rodent proof** trash containers with **secure covers**. The second most important step in my view is to eliminate trash and debris and other areas where they hide and live. In situations where burrows are evident, baiting would be necessary. In this regard, the services of a reputable professional exterminator is most important.

If you have any questions or comments concerning this effort, please don't hesitate to contact me directly or Joe Nicoloro, Senior Sanitary Inspector or John Fallon, Senior Housing Inspector. Thank you in advance for your support.

Sincerely,

  
Robert R. Bersani,  
Commissioner

ATTACHMENT A

# Ten Tips on Rodent Control

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- 1.** Store garbage in metal or heavy plastic containers with tight lids.
  - 2.** Place trash outside shortly before pickup; don't leave plastic garbage bags out overnight.
  - 3.** Remove weeds and debris near buildings and in yards; don't give rats a place to hide.
  - 4.** Store opened food in metal or glass containers with tight lids.
  - 5.** Don't leave extra pet food out; store it in a secure container.
  - 6.** Sweep up food remains, litter, and trash – inside *and* outside your home.
  - 7.** Inspect your basement and house for cracks and holes; seal them with mortar.
  - 8.** Make sure you have screens on windows; inspect windows and screens for holes.
  - 9.** Keep outside doors closed; use metal trim to prevent rodents from gnawing and entering underneath.
  - 10.** Don't provide hiding places for rodents; store materials such as lumber and boxes on a rack with a clean, open area underneath. Get rid of unused materials.
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# Landscaping for Rodent Control

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Rats and mice often find hiding and living space in landscaped areas, especially when there are food sources nearby. Rats will actually seek out soil to dig burrows, where they then live and breed. Even attractive landscaping can conceal or create a major rodent problem. For rodent control to work, landscaping must be rodent-proof.

Follow these 10 tips to help solve or prevent rodent problems around your property and landscaping.

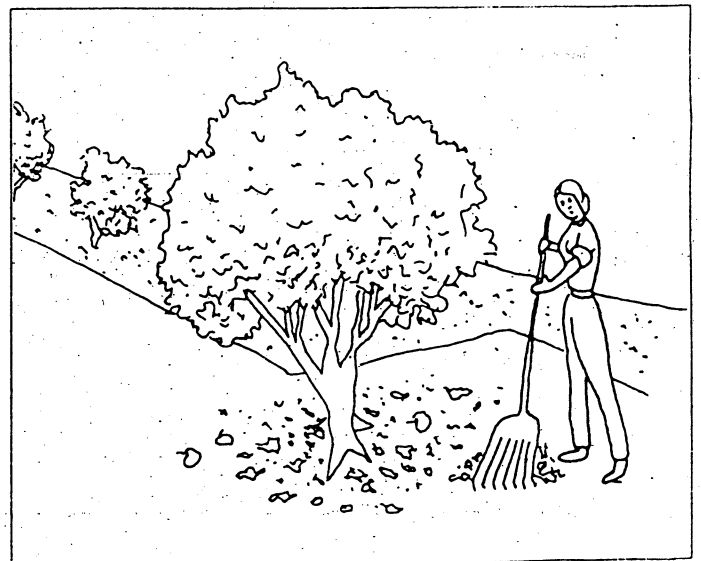
**1.** Place enough garbage containers in eating and pedestrian areas, so food is not available to rodents. Locate containers, benches, and eating areas in open spaces, away from walls and dense ground cover (low-growing plants). Rodents like to live close to where they can find food.

**2.** Empty garbage containers and sweep up litter daily, especially before evening when rats and mice

are most active. Don't leave plastic bags containing garbage outside overnight.

**3.** Keep all vegetation 2 to 3 feet away from walls. Install a border of pea stone, about 2 feet wide and 4 to 6 inches deep, along walls. Pea stone (1/4 to 3/8 inch diameter) can also be spread throughout shrub areas to help prevent weeds and burrowing.

**4.** Choose plants that do not produce large amounts of fruit and seed. Clean up fallen fruit and seeds regularly.



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- Another peak in breeding occurs in early September as summer temperatures cool.

### **Fall**

- Natural food sources and vegetation cover diminish as the weather turns colder.
- Rodents are relatively abundant and seek winter homes.

### **Be aware that:**

- People see more rodents from May to July because of spring breeding, and also during October and November as the seasons change.
- A mild winter means that fewer rats and mice die from natural causes – thus more will be seen in the spring.
- A rainy spring or summer brings more weeds (shelter), water, and natural food sources (seeds, insects) – thus more rodents will breed and survive.
- Rats and mice seek winter shelter inside buildings following the first cold spell each fall.

### **What you can do:**

- Take advantage of seasonal change. Make sure that rodents are controlled during winter – and there will be fewer around to breed in the spring. This can help prevent a year of problems.
- Store garbage in metal or heavy-duty plastic containers with tight-fitting lids. Keep kitchens clean and food stored in secure containers. Where rodents are present, use traps or poison bait to eliminate them.
- Keep yards clean, so that rats and mice don't have shelter and food necessary for breeding – and so that any young rodents seeking a new home won't easily establish. This includes cleanup of weeds, trash piles, garbage, and pet food.
- Inspect buildings carefully, especially in the early fall. Make sure there are no holes or cracks for rats and mice to gain entrance.

### **Remember:**

You can make rodent control work by reducing the food, water, and shelter that rodents need to thrive – and that's an important tip for every season of the year!

# The Changing Seasons

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## *Factors in Rodent Control*

The number of rats and mice, and their behavior, changes throughout the year.

This is because each season brings a different environment – winter brings snow, spring brings rain and plant growth, summer brings hot weather, and fall brings cooler temperatures and annual disappearance of vegetation. For rodent control, it's important to know how these changes affect rats and mice and how best to apply control practices.

### **What happens each season**

#### **Winter**

- Rodent populations are at their annual low and breeding is minimal.
- Many rodents do not survive during periods of cold and snow.

- Natural food sources (such as seeds and insects) are harder to find.
- Rodents prefer protected places in or near buildings.

#### **Spring**

- Annual breeding cycles begin about March as the weather gets warmer.
- Spring rains bring vegetation growth, providing breeding areas and additional food sources.
- Rodents become more abundant by late spring.
- Young rats and mice wander and seek food and new home sites.

#### **Summer**

- Food and vegetation are abundant.
- Rats and mice are more common because of spring breeding and available food.

*(turn over)*

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**5.** Space shrubs and ground covers away from each other. If ground cover is essential, locate it away from potential food sources and make sure litter is cleaned up daily.

**6.** Eliminate and avoid planting dense vegetation. Select plants that have open or airy shapes. Space them apart, allowing light to penetrate, creating openness between and underneath.

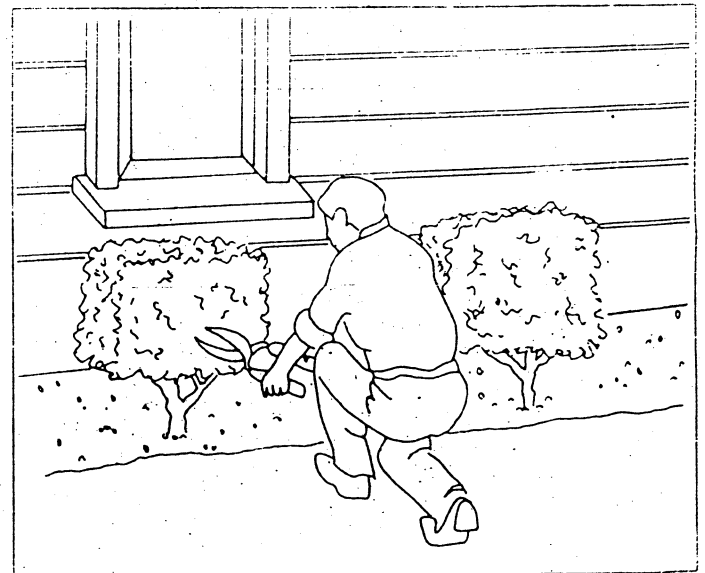
**7.** Use heavy-duty refuse containers free of openings larger than 1/4 inch. In public areas, use containers with domed lids. Inspect containers regularly and replace those that have cracks or holes.

**8.** Trim shrubs and trees regularly so branches do not hug the ground. This allows easy inspection and cleaning of refuse underneath, and also eliminates hiding space for rodents.

**9.** Remove weeds promptly to help expose or prevent burrowing, and because rodents eat seeds. Cut grass frequently so it does not grow tall.

**10.** Inspect landscaping weekly for rodent droppings and burrows. To determine if a burrow is active, place soil in the opening and check the next day to see if it has reopened. Use poison bait or traps when necessary.

**Remember:** Manage your environment and control pest problems. Don't provide the shelter and food that rodents need to thrive!





**CITY OF CAMBRIDGE**  
INSPECTIONAL SERVICES DEPARTMENT 831 MASS. AVE.  
CAMBRIDGE, MASSACHUSETTS 02139 (617) 349-6100

ROBERT R. BERSANI  
Commissioner

**May 3, 2000**

**Response to City Council Order #2 dated 4/24/00. Rodent problem in the area of Gore, Fulkerson, Binney and Bent Streets.**

**On May 1, 2000 an on site inspection was made by John Fallon, Senior Housing Inspector, Lauren Sullivan, Sanitary Inspector and David Byrne, Building Inspector of the areas requested above per council order #2.**

**The following are our findings:**

**Lauren Sullivan as of September 1999 has monitored the gore Street area. The only outstanding violations were at the 35 37 Gore Street Location. This residential unit was checked on May 1, 2000 all pending violations were corrected. A clearance form was sent to the owner on May 2, 2000. He was also called to be informed that 4 trash lids were missing and that the debris from clearing out the shed had to be removed. The owner will do as requested. A reinspection will be made in 10 days.**

**29-33 Gore Street was also monitored from September 1999 to current. Owner has complied with all departmental requests. Today's inspection did show new evidence of three rodent burrows. The owner will contact Yankee Pest Control and then seal open burrows. A reinspection will be made in 10 days.**

**Gold Star Mothers Park Gore Street was checked for rodents on May 1, 2000. No evidence of rodents was found.**

**85 Gore Street residential home unoccupied inspected for rodents. No evidence of rats found possibly skunks or raccoons Complaint #4684 was written up for housing to check as the rear area was found to be a fire hazard as well as a harborage area. The façade of house was also noted to have open rotted holes from some type of animal.**

*ATTACHMENT B*

**Marias Sub Corner of Third Street and Gore Street No evidence of rodents found. The owner has P&J Pest Control Company contracted monthly.**

**38 Fulkerson Street All Seasons Construction is working on this residential home. The office was contacted to have them put out rodent bait boxes. City Service Pest Control Company of Somerville has been contracted. Michele will fax receipt.**

**Kennedy School 158 Spring Street the Dumpster area and loading dock were inspected for rodents no evidence noted. The area was also cleared of all litter.**

**Metropolitan Pipe Company 303 Binney Street area was inspected on April 4, 2000. Litter and brush were to be cleaned from the entire grounds. No evidence of rodents noted at visit. The middle section of this lot is leased to the City's School Department. Tina Fischer was contacted regarding clearing all litter. A reinspection on April 27, 2000 showed that both areas were cleared except for some landscape work at the rear of the lot. The owner is aware and should have completed soon. The school bus section will be checked and cleared weekly by Greg Nosworthy. Terminix has put out rodent bait boxes.**

**Siena Construction 2 site locations: 301 Binney Street and 157 Fulkerson Street. On March 27, 2000 I inspected both sites with Mr. Rich Fiorenza. No Signs of any rodent activity noted in either building. Waltham Chemical Company has been contracted for rodent control. Both sites were set up in February 2000 and March 2000 receipts are attached. Both sites are being monitored and logged by Waltham Chemicals Pest Control Operator twice a month. Most recent visits were April 19, 2000 and April 20, 2000.**

**275 Third Street the Hamilton Company has had Dewey Service Corporation for rodent control since my request in February 2000. Monthly services are being performed at this site. The most recent visit was April 19, 2000. Receipt attached.**


**Biogen Bio - 8 Turner Construction site 15 Cambridge Center will be monitored by Waltham Chemical monthly. Receipts and job description are also provided.**

**191 Monsignor O'Brien Highway Natraj Hospitality LLC has had Watch All Pest Control from October 1999 to most recent visit on March 16, 2000. No activity of rodents found on site.**

**71 Fulkerson Street Residential units. Call in to Danin Management Company regarding rodent control.**

**The City's contracted exterminator has been J.B. from Clancy Brothers he has baited all problem areas in this order five or more times since October 1999. He will continue to monitor all City Storms sewers and City property until the rodent problem is under control.**

**All the above locations will be reinspected or paperwork provided to you as we receive it here at Inspectional services Department.**

  
**Lauren Sullivan**  
**Sanitary Inspector**  
**City of Cambridge**

**C.c.; John Fallon, Senior Housing Inspector; David Byrne, Building Inspector; Robert Bracey, Housing Inspector**

**173 Bent Street TSSG Inc. has contracted Classic Pest Eliminators as of May 3, 2000. Receipt provided. Boxes will be monitored throughout job.**

**320 Charles Street F. L. Caulfield & Sons, Inc. Per David Byrne's request the Company has contracted Archos, Inc. Receipt provided. 235 Third Street residential home and garage. On inspection area noted to have garbage and harborage areas behind garage and along home Complaint # 4685 was submitted to housing division report to follow.**

**Beal Company construction site at 286/300 Third Street. Called on May 2, 2000 at 451-2100. Advised to bait all areas for rodent control receipt to follow.**

**Berry Construction Company 364 Third Street receipts provided from Waltham Chemical Company for April, 2000 and May, 2000. Area will continue to be monitored.**

**195 Binney Street Worthington Apartments area inspected for rodents no evidence noted at this visit. Call to Mr. Dick Russell re: odors from catch basins he will address and also have Waltham Chemical bait basins also. Receipt to follow.**

**201 Third Street Kendall House of Pizza. We met with owners regarding the unsanitary conditions of the Dumpster and Grease bin area. Advised to start cleaning ASAP. Reinspection was done on May 5, 2000 area found cleaner Dumpster was disinfected. One more pick up added by waste Management. Owner will have grease bin area degreased and lined with a cleanable material. Owner to also put out rodent bait box as needed. Reinspection due in 10 days.**

**One Kendall Square Walsh Brothers Inc. They have contracted Waltham Chemical for rodent control. Receipts provided from the Amgen Center Field office from July 1999 to April 2000. This job will be continued to be monitored for rodent control.**



ROBERT R. BERSANI  
Commissioner

*Rodents*

**CITY OF CAMBRIDGE**  
INSPECTIONAL SERVICES DEPARTMENT 831 MASS. AVE.  
CAMBRIDGE, MASSACHUSETTS 02139 (617) 349-6100

March 28, 2001

**BUILDING PERMIT BULLETIN**

To: All Building Permit Applicants

From: Commissioner of Inspectional Services

Subject: Rodent Control Requirements for Building and Demolition Permits

In accordance with the authority granted the Commissioner of Inspectional Services by the Massachusetts Building Code, Sections 101.4 and 106.1, and the Massachusetts State Sanitary Code, Chapter I, 105 CMR 400.000, and Chapter II, 105CMR410.602, it is established that the control of rodent infestation is a precondition to do the work as described below:

1. A permit application which includes as part of the construction project; demolition, new construction, foundation work, basement work involving excavation, significant building rehabilitation, or any other activity which requires the excavation of soil in and around the construction site shall not be approved unless the application is accompanied by a signed statement from a licensed exterminator stating that the premises have been inspected and are free from rodent infestation.
2. For major projects, defined as new construction in excess of 10,000 sq. ft. in GFA, or when deemed necessary by the Building Commissioner, the applicant is required to have in place an approved rodent control contract from an independent licensed exterminator before the building permit is issued. The contract is to contain, as a minimum, the elements listed on the attached.
3. In all cases, permit applicants are responsible for an effective trash management program. Further, the permit applicants are responsible for taking appropriate corrective measures if their construction activity creates or intensifies rodent infestation effecting abutters to the construction site.

Sincerely,

*Rob Bersani*  
R. R. Bersani  
Commissioner



**CITY OF CAMBRIDGE**  
INSPECTIONAL SERVICES DEPARTMENT 831 MASS. AVE.  
CAMBRIDGE, MASSACHUSETTS 02139 (617) 349-6100

ROBERT R. BERSANI  
Commissioner

March 28, 2001

**BUILDING PERMIT BULLETIN(CONT.)**

**Required Elements of Rodent Control Contract**

- Preconstruction survey to identify areas of rodent activity at construction site and at exterior areas of abutting properties(with owners permission).
- Preconstruction baiting of any areas identified in the above survey that are active, as well as all manholes on site.
- Site visits by a trained technician at least bi-weekly to monitor activity and bait as necessary.
- Intensified pest monitoring in the area of construction trailers and lunch areas. Monitoring of site to insure regular removal of trash from site and identification and elimination of harborage areas..
- Response to citizen complaints from abutting property owners relating to increased rodent activity associated with construction project.
- Submittal of monthly reports(reports to be kept on file at construction trailer for review by ISD inspectors).

Note: The construction contractor is responsible for an effective trash management program consisting of the use of heavy duty refuse containers with tight fitting lids for disposal of all garbage and trash associated with food. Maintain these containers so there are no openings that would allow for rodent access. Dumpsters used for storage of garbage and trash must be properly maintained and the doors kept tightly closed.



**CITY OF CAMBRIDGE**  
**INTEROFFICE CORRESPONDENCE**

To: All Building Inspectors

From: Building Commissioner

RE: Rodent Control Provisions in Building Permits

Because of the increasing problems we are experiencing in controlling rodents across the City, I have decided to implement rodent control procedures, similar to those contained in the demolition permit, for building permits.

Please review the attached procedures. I have scheduled a meeting for the building inspectors in my office at 9:30 Friday morning to discuss.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "R. R. Bersani".

R. R. Bersani

Copy:  
M. Nicoloro  
Ranjit  
John Fallon  
J. Nicoloro

Presentation on 1715  
Rodent Control  
Program

April 23, 2001