



# FIELD MICE and HOUSE MICE



← ACTUAL SIZE HOLE A MOUSE CAN ENTER.



FIELD or HOUSE MOUSE (*Mus musculus*)

## GENERAL INFORMATION:

Field and House Mice may become a serious nuisance to homeowners, businessmen, and others at certain times of the year. This is a phenomenon which occurs in many areas of California. It is partly a result of new housing and commercial construction advancing into former agricultural areas.

Although the mouse problem may have originated on neighboring agricultural land, once mice migrate, there is little that agriculture can do to eliminate or control them at the source. In this case, control then becomes the responsibility of each homeowner. It is unfortunate that these situations develop; however, there is little that can be done for residents in an agricultural area in the way of prevention.

A natural, cyclic rise in the mouse population occurs every few years during the late spring and summer months and this also contributes to the problem. However, the mouse population usually starts a natural and rapid decline before the end of winter to relieve the situation. Because of the short lifespan of the mouse, the tremendous cost, the questionable results, and potential danger to humans, pets, and other animals, large scale extermination programs are not practical.

## DAMAGE:

When mice invade homes and other buildings, they can gnaw holes in walls and wood floors, and spread feces and urine around the interior. They may cause considerable damage to furniture, bedding, and carpets, as well as contaminating food and food utensils.

## HEALTH CONCERNS:

House Mice can carry Salmonella, but are not known to carry Hantavirus. However, the very similar Deer Mouse (*Peromyscus maniculatus*), the primary carrier of Hantavirus, also readily enters human dwellings. Therefore, **it is best to assume that all mice (and other rodents) are infected with diseases.**

## CONTROL IS EVERYONE'S CONCERN:

When mice invade your neighborhood, the best way to control them is through poisoning, trapping, and other appropriate means:

1. Place all garbage, preferably wrapped in paper, in rodent-proof, tightly covered plastic containers.
2. Remove all rubbish, debris, and trash in which rodents may seek harborage.
3. Store all lumber, wood scraps, crating, etc. at least 18 inches off the ground and keep weeds under control.
4. Pet foods should be stored in mouse-proof containers and should not be feed in excess of the pet's need. Do not leave food outside overnight.
5. Fruits and nuts should be properly harvested and stored where mice cannot gain access to them.
6. Repair all openings through which the mice may enter your home. Check doors, house vents, water and gas lines entering the house. Small holes should be patched with plaster and doors

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fitted tightly so there is no opening larger than one-fourth inch. See the District's brochure "Rodent-Proofing Your Residence" for more information on how to prevent rodents from entering a home or other building.

7. Clean up rodent contaminated areas by spraying with a solution of 1 part household bleach and 5 parts water; moisten but do not soak. Wipe up droppings, seal in double plastic bags, and dispose of in the trash. **DO NOT SWEEP OR VACUUM** because Hantavirus and other rodent-borne diseases can be transmitted when contaminated dust particles are inhaled.

#### **POISONING:**

The use of anticoagulant poisons in properly protected bait stations which do not pose a hazard to pets and children is recommended. Anticoagulant baits may be purchased ready mixed under various trade names at most stores that sell pesticides. Be sure to check the label to determine that the poison is approved for mouse control.

Some anticoagulant baits are relatively slow acting in that they require several successive days of feeding to produce death, but they are very effective and mice rarely become suspicious of the bait. **WARNING:** Indoor baiting can cause mice to die in inaccessible places, possibly creating odor problems.

All dead rodents should be disposed of by placing in double plastic bags, sealing, and placing in the garbage container.

#### **BAIT STATIONS:**

Bait should be placed along runways, mouse holes, or places where droppings are heaviest. Bait should be placed inside commercially prepared tamper resistant bait stations. Keep bait stations full. Renew bait every six weeks, or when it becomes moldy, in order to keep it fresh and effective.

#### **CAUTION:**

**KEEP PESTICIDE CONTAINERS ADEQUATELY LABELED AND STORE UNUSED PORTIONS WHERE CHILDREN AND PETS DO NOT HAVE ACCESS TO THEM!**

#### **TRAPPING:**

In trapping mice, remember that they prefer to travel close to walls and behind boxes and other objects that offer protection and concealment. Knowing this will help you do a more effective job of trapping mice.

Mouse traps should be placed at right angles to a wall or other vertical object in areas of mouse activity (indicated by gnawing, droppings, nests, and holes). In this way the trigger mechanism of "snap traps," if placed next to the wall, will intersect the path that the mouse is most likely to travel. Double sets of traps often prove more successful than a single trap placed in an area of activity. Glue tray traps can be substituted for snap traps if snap traps are undesirable.

Mice are attracted to almost any bait: peanut butter, nut meats, bacon, cheese, soft candies, and cake. **REMEMBER; USE PLENTY OF TRAPS AND PLACE THEM PROPERLY.** If one trap is good, **TEN** traps are that much better. See the District's brochure "How To Use Rodent Traps" for further information on trapping mice.

#### **THE DISTRICT CAN HELP:**

Residents of the Mosquito and Vector Management District can receive a free rodent inspection upon request. A Certified Vector Control Technician will come to your home and identify specific places where rodents enter buildings and conditions that are conducive to rodents. The technician will also suggest specific remedies for problems. All Mosquito and Vector Management District services are provided free of charge.

## **MOSQUITO and VECTOR MANAGEMENT DISTRICT**

**of Santa Barbara County**

**DISTRICT OFFICE: 2450 Lillie Ave. \* MAIL: P.O. Box 1389**

**Summerland, CA 93067**

**TELEPHONE: (805) 969-5050 \* E-MAIL: [mvmdistrict@mvmdistrict.org](mailto:mvmdistrict@mvmdistrict.org)**

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