

# Pests in Your Home and Other Buildings

## May 2026

Pests in and around your home or building can pose a significant safety risk. Pests can carry physical and biological hazards that can make you sick and contaminate food.

Use this guidance to help prevent pests in your home or building and know what to do if you find a pest problem.

If you need help accessing or understanding this information, contact [FoodLodging@vermont.gov](mailto:FoodLodging@vermont.gov).

### How to Prevent Pests

Once pests enter a home or building, they can be difficult to get rid of. Preventing them from entering your home or building is key.

#### Pest-proof your home or building

- Store food at least 6 inches off the ground and in tightly sealed containers.
- Seal any holes, cracks and openings in walls, floor junctions and around equipment.
- Make sure doors and windows are tight-fitting, and all doors have sweeps.
- Install and maintain screens on any doors or windows you keep open.
- Securely cover floor drains.

**Did you know?** A mouse can get through a hole the size of a dime. A rat can get through a hole the size of a quarter.



## Get rid of clutter and keep your space clean.

- Eliminate clutter inside and outside. Get rid of old boxes, unused equipment and appliances that could serve as shelter for rodents or other pests.
- Conduct regular exterior grounds maintenance like mowing your lawn and removing overgrown landscaping.
- Manage your garbage, recycling and compost storage so it doesn't attract pests. Make sure containers have tight fitting lids, schedule regular pick-ups or bring them to a waste management facility, and wash and dry containers regularly.
- Keep kitchen and storage areas free of food scraps, dirt and dust. Clean around cabinets, refrigerators, display cases, storage areas and other equipment regularly.

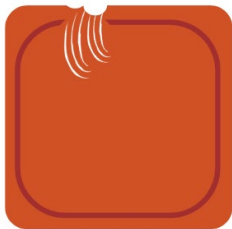
## How to Detect Pests

### Monitor for pests

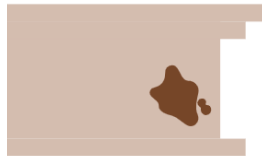
Check for signs of pests in and around your home or building. Look for:



**Rodent droppings or urine stains**



**Gnaw marks**



**Smudges on baseboards and openings**



**Webbing or nesting**



**Dead pests**

## How to Treat for Pests

If you see signs of pests or infestation, **address the problem immediately!**

- Clean up any pest droppings and dead pests. Wear rubber or plastic gloves. Wipe the area. Do not vacuum or sweep, as this can cause tiny droplets containing viruses to get into the air.
- Thoroughly clean and disinfect the area.
- Seal points where pests may be entering.

## Use traps and insect control devices

- Check traps and devices daily and clean up any dead pests.
- Do not put them over food preparation areas.

## Use pesticides safely or hire a pest control professional

Pesticides and poisons can harm people and pets. [Take caution when using pesticides.](#)

- If you must use a pesticide, consider hiring a certified pesticide applicator.
- If you decide to use a pesticide yourself, use one that is clearly labeled for the pest you want to get rid of and follow all label instructions for use and storage.

## Managing Pests in Licensed Food or Lodging Establishments

The presence of pests – such as mice, rats, flies, and cockroaches – is a critical violation of the Vermont Health Regulations for Food Service Establishments.

## Hire professionals for preventative pest control service

- Regular, preventative inspections from professional pest management are one of the best ways to prevent pests. Monthly checks are recommended.
- Coordinate pest control with others in your building and neighborhood.

## Monitor for pests daily

- Check daily for signs of pests in and around your home or building. Make it part of your daily checklist. Be sure to check behind and under equipment. Look for rodent droppings or urine stains, gnaw marks, smudges on baseboards and openings, webbing or nesting and dead pests.
- Read the Keep Pests Out of Your Establishment poster for more information.

## Treat for pests

If your daily monitoring shows signs of pests or infestation, contact your professional pest control service to come as soon as possible. **Don't delay!**

- Follow all the recommendations from your pest control service and your health inspector.
- **Do not use pesticides or poisons yourself.** Poisons for rodent or cockroach control cannot be used in the food storage, food preparation or food service area except by a professional pest control service.