Post Fire Rodent and Wildlife Control

January 27, 2025

ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH

County of Los Angeles Public Health

After a natural disaster, a new threat emerges, wildlife. Wildlife and rodents move to new areas in search of food, water, and shelter. They can spread disease, contaminate food, and destroy property. There may also be dead, injured, or displaced animals (wild and domestic). Displaced or injured animals may be confused and unpredictable. Local animal control authorities should be contacted to handle animal matters.

Eliminate hiding areas

Abandoned vehicles, discarded furniture, or unused appliances and equipment should be removed from the property.

Rodents may occupy the gap between double fencing, and it is recommended that it be fixed.

Store outdoor items a minimum of 18 inches above ground and 12 inches away from the walls and fences. Clean garages and ensure that stored items are organized and elevated.

Prevent Entry

Ensure that rodents and wildlife cannot enter. Keep windows and doors repaired. Doors should fit snugly in the frame to remove openings and gaps.

Foundation and attic vents should be screened with heavy mesh or 16-to-20-gauge galvanized hardware cloth (preferably a sheet metal frame).

Sanitation

Remove all sources of food. Their major source of food is found in garbage cans. Store all trash in garbage cans that are waterproof and have a tight-fitting lid. Put all garbage inside of plastic bags **before** placing into the trash can, this will keep the trash can clean, reduce odors, and prevent fly breeding.
Keep food sealed in containers with tight fitting lids.

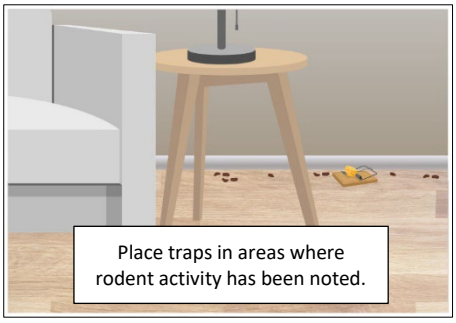
Outdoor food sources, including unharvested fruits, vegetables, or nuts on the tree or on the ground, need to be thrown away promptly.

Pet food and water that is left out over night or not completely eaten is a common source of food. Pet food and wild bird seeds should be stored inside metal containers with tight-fitting lids.

When Rodents are in the Home

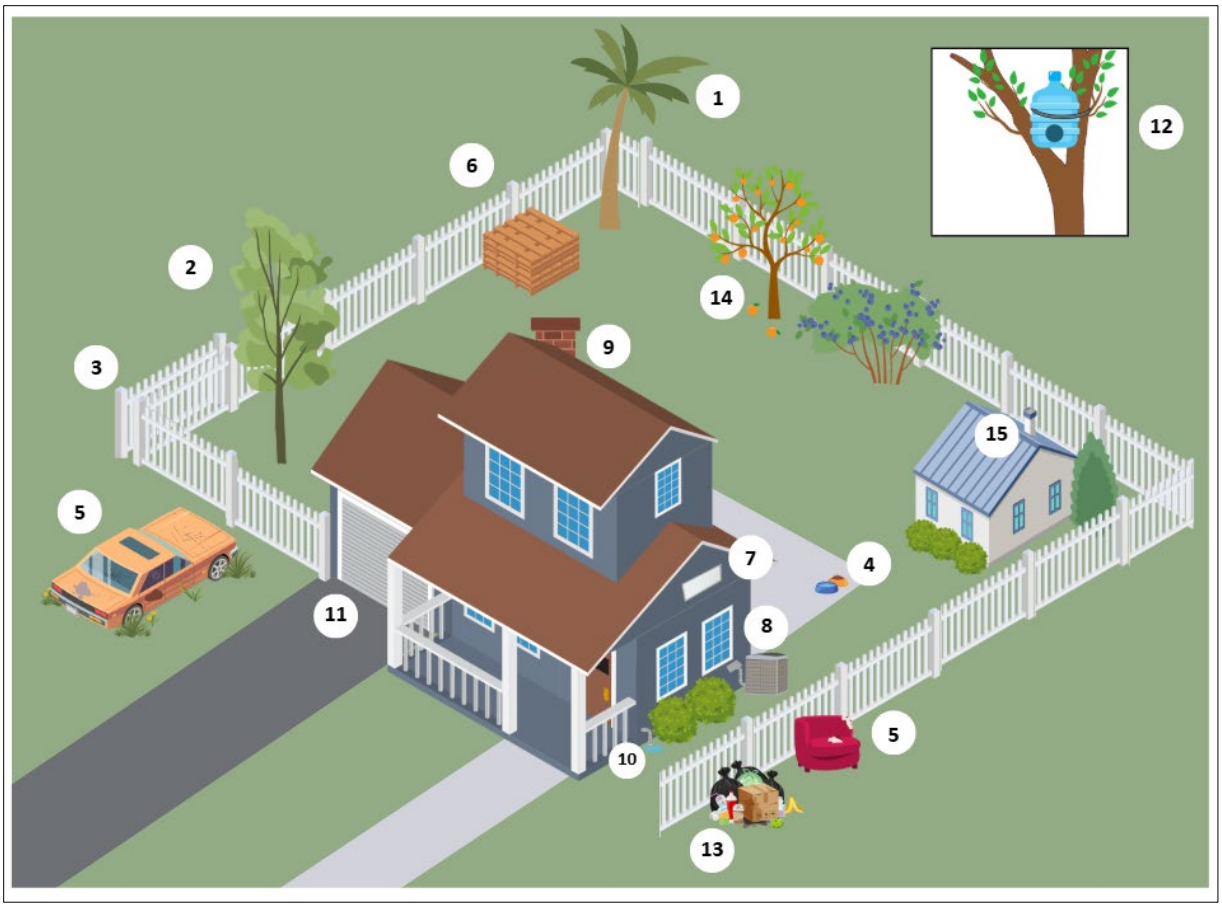
Use snap traps or glue boards. Avoid using poison baits. Place baited but unset traps out for several nights; this is done so the rat will get used to the trap. Once the rat takes the bait, the next day rebait and set the trap. Some examples of baits include peanut butter on cotton or raw bacon to the trigger with light string or fine wire.

If using a glue board, it should be secured to an object that does not move, with a nail or wire. Place the glue board in runways but not in corners. To draw the rodent out, place pieces of apples, nuts, or dry food in the center.


Place traps in areas where rodent activity has been noted.

Always use safety precautions when cleaning and throwing away dead rodents or traps. Wear gloves and use a household disinfectant anywhere that there were rodents or contaminated material. Follow the steps below for disinfection:

1. Use a paper towel or cloth when cleaning with disinfectant. Place it in a plastic bag when done.
2. Seal the plastic bag tightly and throw it in the trash.
3. **Before removing gloves**, disinfect them and then throw them in the trash.
4. Wash hands well with soap and water.



1. Remove all dead palm fonds.

2. Trim tree limbs and tall plants so they are 6 feet away from roof, attic vents, eaves, and utility lines, leaving space beneath bushes to prevent nesting areas.

3. Avoid double fencing because this will provide space for rodents to nest.

4. Remove dog droppings daily and feed pets in a clear area that is away from grass and nesting areas. Do not leave pet food out overnight.

5. Remove old vehicles and items that need to be thrown away from property.

6. Elevate stored items at least 18 inches above ground and 12 inches from walls and fences.

7. Use ¼ inch galvanized hardware cloth for vent and crawl spaces. Frames should fit properly with no gaps at the edges.

8. Seal gaps around pipes entering walls with ¼ inch hardware cloth, sheet metal, concrete, or mortar.

9. Screen openings at intersecting roof eaves and where chimney intersects roof.

10. Repair all plumbing leaks.

11. Install door sweeps or weather stripping on all exterior doors. Close all openings greater than ¼ inch to exclude rodents.

12. Bait stations can be made of ½ gallon or 1 gallon plastic containers, placed in trees for roof rats. Cut 2 holes in the container on opposite sides, they should be 1 ½ to 2 inches in diameter. Secure in place with wire to avoid it from spilling. Place bait in container and refill for 10 to 14 days or until no new signs of rats. Attach the label from the pesticide package to the plastic container.

13. Throw trash away properly.

14. Harvest all fruit and vegetables when ripe. Collect fallen fruit, and compost if necessary.

15. Clean and organize garage and storage buildings. Make sure doors close properly.

For questions, please contact the **Environmental Health Division at (888) 700-9995**.