



House Mice

Mus domesticus

House mice range in size from about 7 to 9 cm in length (not including the tail), and are usually varying shades of a grey/brown in colour. Mice are mainly nocturnal but can be seen during daylight hours if their numbers are high, normal place of harbourage has been disturbed or their food supply is limited.

Mice are naturally inquisitive creatures and prefer to run alongside objects. Inside, movement is usually confined to the junction of the wall and the floor. It is the combination of these habits that brings them into our homes. If a mouse happens to be running alongside the walls around the outside of your property it will discover any broken airbricks or a gaps under a door and, being inquisitive, will then get inside the property.

How do I know if I have a mouse problem?

The first indication that most people report is hearing scrabbling or scratching noises coming from the loft, walls or under the flooring. Other signs of mice would be finding their droppings or finding the damage they do by their constant gnawing. Mouse droppings are black to brown in colour and resemble grains of rice.

Quite often birds nesting in the springtime can be mistaken for a mouse problem. A good way of telling the difference is that birds tend to be more active from dawn to dusk and mice are more active from dusk to dawn. Noises from birds are normally only heard from around the edges of the loft and usually from the same area. If you have mice in the loft, the noises can be heard from any area, as the mice are quite at home in the dark.

Why have I got mice?

Quite simply because there is a way in for them! Mice can squeeze through a gap as small as 7mm.

Do mice pose a risk to my health?

Mice can be a health hazard because they carry the salmonella bacteria that can be passed on to people through food or food surfaces that they contaminate. Any food preparation surfaces that mice may have been in contact with should be washed down with a mild disinfectant. Any contaminated food produce should be thrown away.

Mice can also be very destructive to electrical wiring by gnawing on the plastic coating. In extreme cases, this can cause fires or electrical shock to anyone touching the exposed wires.

Where do mice live?

House mice will live anywhere that does not get disturbed. A few of the places where nests have been found include under the floorboards, in the loft, and in the back of the freezer or fridge.

Within the home mice tend to move around via the cavity walls and by following pipe work throughout the property. If a mouse enters your property through a broken airbrick, it has access under the floor and from there it can usually find access to the cavity wall. Once the mouse is in the cavity wall it will usually find its way into the loft. From the loft the mice will often follow the pipe work throughout the property and have access to the airing cupboard, bathroom and kitchen.

How can I keep mice out of the house?

- 1) Replace any broken airbricks.
- 2) Seal any gaps under doors and gaps around pipe work. Bristle strip (draught excluder) is a good way of quickly sealing up under doors and wire wool is a quick remedy for sealing around pipe work.
- 3) If you have a garage attached to your house, mice can usually get under the doors of most garages. As the insides of garages are not as well sealed as the inside of your house, mice can easily find a way through into the cavity wall and then into the loft and walls of your house. This can be difficult to control because garages have gaps under the doors for ventilation purposes. However, inspect the inside of the garage for gaps around any electrical wiring or pipe work that passes through to the adjoining wall.
- 4) Mice are very good at climbing and if you have any climbing plants on the walls of your property it is best that they are pruned back below the gutter.
- 5) Inspect thoroughly anything that you may be transferring from a shed or garage into the house.

What can the Council do to help?

One of our pest control officers can visit your home and treat the problem. There is a charge for the treatment in domestic premises, but it is free of charge if you are receiving an income-related benefit. The treatment can take several weeks to complete (depending on the severity) and the pest control officer will advise you on possible mouse entry points to help you keep them out in the future. With town houses (terraced) or semi detached houses, finding the entry points for mice can be a little more complicated. Mice can enter one property and find their way through to another property via the cavity walls. Our pest control officers are very experienced in dealing with this sort of situation and will investigate other properties to locate the entry points. Once the treatment has been completed all the rodenticide is removed and, providing entry points found have been sealed, you shouldn't need to contact us again.

Contact Animal Control 01206 282581

What action can I take myself?

Garden centres, DIY centres and some general stores will stock a variety of poisons and traps. Always use poisons as instructed on the packet and ensure that pets and young children have no access to baited areas.

Tips

It is uncommon for mice to feed in open areas, so when you are laying rodenticide or placing traps place them against the wall/floor junctions, or ceiling joists if you are treating a loft space. Never leave exposed baits if you have pets or young children.

If you are planning to use traps place them at right angles to the wall with the baited side of the trap against the wall. Cheese is not particularly good bait to use on traps as it quickly dries out and is easily pulled off without triggering the mechanism. Baiting the trap with something sweet and sticky works well, such as chocolate, toffee or fudge.

If you are planning to use a live catch trap, place it flush against a wall or an object so that the mouse can easily find the entrance. Live catch traps need to be inspected often so that the mouse can be released with the minimum of stress.

When using a rodenticide to control mice it is better to use lots of smaller baiting points rather than one large baited area. Mice rarely stay still to feed for long and prefer to move from one feeding area to another, so one baiting point may not be sufficient to control them.