

INFORMATIONAL BULLETIN No. 2021-5-8

Rodents in Food Facilities

Rodents are pests that can spread disease, contaminate food, and destroy property. Rodents are known to be disease carriers that contaminate food or food contact surfaces they walk on through urination and defecation. A food facility that is operating with rodents is in violation of California Health and Safety Code Section 114259.1 and will be closed immediately. The health permit is temporarily suspended, and the food facility will remain closed until a representative of the City of Long Beach, Bureau of Environmental Health determines the conditions which prompted the suspension no longer exist.

Common Diseases

Salmonella: a bacteria that can cause a food borne illness. Rodents visit dumpsters, sewers, and other filthy areas where salmonella is present. Then they go into homes and restaurants where they can spread bacteria on foods you eat and serve.

Plague: a bacteria that causes painful lymph nodes, fever, extreme exhaustion and caused the death of millions of humans in the middle ages.

Hantavirus: a fatal viral disease that is ingested or inhaled by humans from mouse feces or urine.

Lymphocytic choriomeningitis (LCM): a rodent-borne viral infection that can cause meningitis or encephalitis in humans.

Signs of Infestation

Look for the following common signs of rodent infestations:

Droppings: Fecal matter is $\frac{1}{4}$ of an inch to $\frac{1}{2}$ inch long. Fresh droppings are soft, black and shiny. Older droppings are dark colored, hard, crusted, and easy to break.

Urine and odor: Urine has a unique musky odor. Rodent urine is visible under a black light.



Rub marks: Rodents leave oils and dirt from their bodies along the walls they travel.

Gnaws: Rodents chew almost anything. They chew electrical wires, fabric, and screen doors. They use cloth, twigs, paper, dust and other items to make nests. They also chew through areas to enter or exit a structure.

Prevention

Sealing: Seal all holes, gaps, and cracks in facility. Weather strip the bottom of doorways that lead to the exterior. Rodents can squeeze through areas as small as ¼ inch.

Storage: Store food six inches or more off the floor in approved rodent proof containers. Keep storage areas clean, well lit, and clear of clutter and unused equipment. Do not leave food or soiled utensils overnight.

Cleaning: Maintain a clean facility. Keep a cleaning log or schedule.

Maintenance: Repair or replace torn foundation vents or vents with holes larger than ¼ inch. Keep dumpster area clean and the lids closed. Remove piles of debris and trash around the property.

Pest Control: Ask your pest control company for advice to keep pests out of your facility.



Mandatory Rodent Infestation Closure

1. Immediately close your restaurant as instructed by the inspector and call your licensed pest control company.
2. Follow the advice of your inspector and pest control company (seal holes, clean, etc.)
3. Eliminate all rodents from the facility.
4. Spray rodent droppings with a mixture of bleach and water prior to cleaning.
5. Clean and sanitize the entire facility including all food contact areas with an approved sanitizer solution of 100 ppm of chlorine, 200 ppm of quaternary ammonia, or 25 ppm of iodine.
6. Call (562) 570-4129 to request a re-inspection/re-instatement of your health permit.
Facility will be allowed to open only when there is no evidence of infestation.

DO NOT open your facility or begin preparing food without written approval by a representative of the City of Long Beach, Bureau of Environmental Health.