

## The Rodent Guard


**M**ice and rats are a serious pest problem for many people, causing significant damage and presenting potential disease and health risks.

While rodent activity occurs all year long, it is more pronounced during the fall and winter months. That's why Pro-Tech Pest Control offers the Rodent Guard as an exclusive service for our semi-annual customers. The Rodent Guard service is designed to prevent mice from becoming a major problem in the home and should not be used as a clean-out tool.

The Rodent Guard includes inspecting your home for rodent infestation, blocking common pest entryways, and placing tamper-resistant bait stations in appropriate areas.

Timing of your Rodent Guard is important; it should be performed before the first major frosts occur. When the proper materials are placed inside and around your home before a rodent harborage is established, it greatly improves the chances of reaching your goal of living in a rodent-free home.

Once mice have established a harborage inside your home, the Rodent Guard service may need the extra support of a full rodent clean-out. Both the Rodent Guard and full rodent clean-outs are supported by a six-month warranty.

Preventative and maintenance care via the Rodent Guard can save you 40-60% off the normal cost of rodent clean-out services. So, an ounce of prevention really is worth a pound of cure. 



### Thank You

We know this tough economy has impacted everyone, so we want to thank all of our customers for their continued faith in Pro-Tech. We especially thank our loyal semi-annual customers for their continued business through these trying times. We're always there to serve you – through good times and bad (and we're ready for some "good").

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## Integrating Pest Management in Schools

As the new school year approaches, the Massachusetts Department of Agricultural Resources (DAR) is urging parents to ask whether their child's school or daycare facility has a current school Integrated Pest Management (IPM) plan for safe pesticide use. "At home and in the classroom, parents are the first line of defense in protecting their children against pesticide exposure," said DAR Commissioner Scott Soares. "Maintaining a school or day care IPM plan is not only required by law, but it is also crucial to insure children's safety."

According to DAR's Division of Crop and Pest Services, the vast majority of schools and daycare facilities have filed IPM plans with DAR, but roughly 200 schools and 400 day care facilities are not in compliance with the state IPM law. DAR periodically notifies schools without plans about the requirements throughout the year. Day care facilities can lose their operating licenses if they do not comply and, this year, schools that do not file an IPM plan within 90 days face a \$1,000 fine. In addition, DAR collaborates with the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education and the Department of Early Education and Care to engage school principals and superintendents as well as day care providers in the IMP plan process.

IPM is a systematic strategy for managing pests through prevention, avoidance, monitoring and suppression. If chemical pesticides are necessary, facilities are required to use materials and methods that are safe for the public and reduce environmental risk. DAR recommends that parents ask their child's school or daycare facility if they have a current IPM plan on file.

There are different pesticide use restrictions for indoor and outdoor school or daycare property. Any pesticide product classified as a known, likely, or probable human carcinogen as defined by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency may not be used on outdoor facilities. In addition, any

pesticide product that contains inert ingredients of toxicological concern, according to the EPA, is also prohibited.

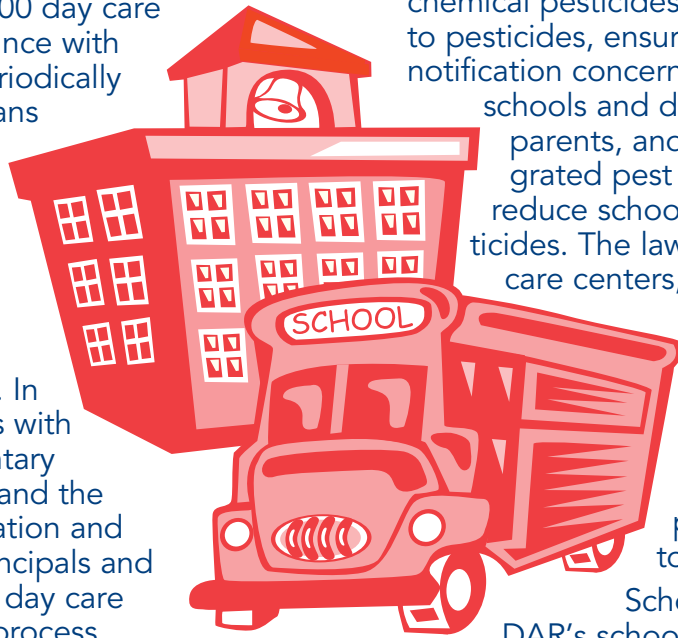
The only materials permitted for indoor use are:

- Anti-microbial pesticides, like bleach, odenticide, insecticide bait, or ready-to-use insecticidal, which must be in tamper-resistant bait stations or inaccessible areas
- **Termiticides may only be used when there is an active infestation**
- **Lower risk products, such as garlic or mint oil.**

In 2000, Massachusetts passed legislation to prevent unnecessary exposure of children to chemical pesticides, promote safer alternatives to pesticides, ensure that clear and accurate notification concerning the use of pesticides in schools and day care centers is available to parents, and to promote the use of integrated pest management techniques to reduce schools' reliance on chemical pesticides. The law requires that schools, day care centers, and school-age child care programs adopt and implement IPM plans that cover both indoor and outdoor areas. Plans must be filed with DAR and at least one copy must be kept on school premises and made available to the public upon request.

School and daycare staff can visit DAR's school IPM website for information about the Children's & Families Protection Act. DAR provides resources, which schools and daycare programs can use to create, edit, and submit IPM Plans online. The website also guides users through the step-by-step process for submitting IPM Plans. To find out if a school or day care facility has filed a school IPM plan, or for more information about the notification requirements and other restrictions on pesticide applications, visit: <http://massnrc.org/ipm>

The Department of Agricultural Resources' Division of Crop and Pest Services is responsible for the regulation of the agricultural industry and pesticide application services in Massachusetts through the diligent inspection, examination, licensing,



## Are you attracting mice?

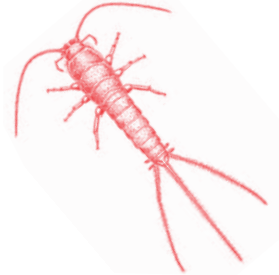
- Here are some things you can do outdoors to make your home a little less attractive to wandering rodents:
- Reduce outdoor clutter and junk that create hiding places. Things such as kiddies' pools, vinyl tarps, storage bins (cushions, garden tools), and lawn equipment make great harborage areas for rodents.
- Trim back vines, trim down ground covers, and trim up shrubs to provide clearance underneath. These places provide shelter and food for rodents during the warmer months. Once the cold weather arrives, the next place is up your foundation and into your basement.
- Pick up any nuts and overripe fruit, and throw out or bury spilled bird seed. Why provide pests with food? Even moving your bird feeders further away from your house will aid in the effort to live rodent-free.
- Raise woodpiles off the ground, or move the pile away from your home. More than once has a customer unknowingly brought a rodent into the home while taking wood inside to burn.

Properly pest-proofing a home to seal up cracks or holes these pests squeeze through can greatly reduce problems. Mice and rats are much more likely to invade a home where they find easy entry.

Remember it is important to take the steps BEFORE it gets too cold.

## Pest Spotlight: Silverfish / Firebrats

Silverfish and firebrats are wingless, flat insects with two long, slender antennae on the front and three long, slender "bristles" at the rear of a tapered, carrot-shaped body. They are 1/2 inch long when fully grown.



Silverfish may be found almost anywhere in the house, but are most commonly found in moist, warm locations (such as around sinks and other plumbing fixtures). They are covered with shiny silver scales that give the body a metallic sheen. They are frequently found in sinks or bathtubs because they fall in seeking moisture and then cannot climb out. Silverfish are most active at night and run very swiftly with a wiggling motion that resembles the swimming action of a fish.

Firebrats are similar to silverfish in overall appearance, but lack the silvery sheen. The body color is gray or brown, usually with numerous dark markings that give a mottled appearance. Unlike the silverfish that may be found in any part of a house, firebrats prefer areas of high temperature (90° F and above) and high humidity. Therefore, firebrats are more common in attics and around furnaces, ovens, and water heaters.

Silverfish and firebrats are pests primarily because they are a nuisance and an annoyance. They may consume or stain foods, fabric, paper, books, or wallpaper. Damage to these items is significant, however, only in cases of very large infestations present over long periods of time.



### Pest Control in the News (continued from pg.2)

registration, quarantine, and enforcement of laws, regulations and orders.

The DAR's mission is to ensure the long-term viability of local agriculture in Massachusetts. Through its four divisions – Agricultural Development, Animal Health, Crop and Pest Services, and Technical Assistance – the DAR strives to support, regulate, and enhance the

Commonwealth's agricultural community, working to promote economically and environmentally-sound food safety and animal health measures, and fulfill agriculture's role in energy conservation and production.



Source: Massachusetts Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs (EOEEA), Sept. 2, 2009.

## Frequently Asked Questions

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***Q: I already have mice, will the Rodent Guard solve my issue?***

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**A:** It might! When performing a Rodent Guard, the technician will place a series of tamper-resistant bait stations containing a first generation rodenticide, designed to eliminate a mouse population. However, if the population is bigger than expected, the bait stations are emptied faster than expected, and the mice population survives.

There lies the importance of performing the Rodent Guard **BEFORE THE MICE GET IN!**

Once inside the home, the mouse begins its search for food. When food is provided (in this case inside a tamper-resistant bait station), the search is short, and the mouse is eliminated before it establishes a harborage inside your home.

***Q: Is the Rodent Guard part of my Semi-Annual Service?***

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**A:** NO. While it is not included in your Semi-Annual Service, it does incur the same cost. Whatever the price of one Semi-Annual service, the same amount is owed for a Rodent Guard. Full rodent clean-outs require more material and time, and therefore, require higher cost.

***Q: When is a good time to schedule my Rodent Guard?***

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**A: RIGHT NOW!**