

## **Rodents After A Storm or Flood**

After a storm, many rodents are displaced from their natural habitat. As a result, these animals seek areas which provide food and shelter. Unfortunately, many of the new rodent havens are in houses, sheds, barns and other buildings. Structures damaged by the storm are particularly attractive and provide easy access to rodents. The unwelcome pests can cause property damage and, in extreme cases, pose a potential health problem.

### **Tips**

#### **Rats and Mice**

- As soon as possible, remove all debris that provides protective cover for rodents from around houses and buildings.
- Keep lawn and field vegetation mowed at a low level to eliminate protective cover for rodents.
- Remove any potential food source such as household trash, waste grain or other foods that might attract mice and rats.
- Openings into buildings around water pipes, electrical wires, vents and doors should be closed with 1/8-inch mesh hardware cloth and/or sheet metal.
- Registered toxicant baits with zinc phosphide or anticoagulates are effective in mouse and rat control.
- Snap traps are effective in capturing nuisance rats and mice. Successful trap baits for the trigger mechanism include whole kernel corn, peanut butter and oatmeal, and oatmeal paste. Traps should be checked each day.

#### **Squirrels in Houses and Buildings**

- Squirrels can be prevented from climbing onto roofs by encircling trees and poles with 2-foot-wide collars of metal 6 feet off the ground. Metal sheets should be attached using encircling wires held together with springs to allow for tree growth. Trees should be trimmed to prevent squirrels from jumping onto roofs.
- Prevent squirrels from traveling on wires to houses and buildings by installing 2-foot sections of lightweight 2- or 3-inch-diameter plastic pipe. Slit pipe lengthwise, spread open and place over wire. The pipe will rotate on the wire and cause traveling squirrels to fall.
- Close openings to attics and eaves of houses and buildings with heavy ½-inch wire mesh or sheet metal.
- With varying degrees of success, ledges and eaves can be treated with a repellent called 4-The Squirrels.
- In closed attics, naphthalene (moth balls), methyl nonyl ketone crystals, or paradichlorobenzene (moth crystals) may work temporarily as a repellent. Use 1-2 pounds spread evenly throughout the attic.
- Traps will catch squirrels, including No. 0 or 1 leghold traps, the "Better Squirrel and Rat Trap," box traps and cage traps. Regular rat-size snap traps will catch flying squirrels.

- Good baits are slices of orange and apple, walnuts and pecans removed from the shell, peanut butter, and sunflower seeds.
- Where firearms are permitted, shooting is effective in reducing squirrel numbers. Check with local law enforcement officials and wildlife conservation officers in your area.

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