Practical Pest Prevention For Schools

**Mouse Prevention**

**Important Steps for Preventing Mice in Schools**

*February*

Plan to protect! Review past rodent problems and sightings.

*March*

Inspect door sweeps; and install 2-3 door sweeps per year.

*May*

Leaf/Litter/Landscape

Check building for cracks and gaps

*August*

Inspect classrooms for rodent droppings

*October*

Leaf/Litter/Landscape

*Every Month*

Have rodent traps inspected in refuse areas, mechanical and cafeteria and kitchens.

**Teacher Information**

Report those droppings

Open doors help pests infest

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**Plan to Protect: Review past problems and sightings of rodents in the school**

During the Plan to Protect phase, create a list of places where rodents have been captured, reported or where their feces were found. In any area, more than 1 mouse report in a month or more than three reports during a year means there are likely other rodents or hidden pathways they can use. If this occurs, additional pest control and prevention measures will be needed.

**Inspect door sweeps; install 2-3 new door sweeps per year**

Maintained door sweeps will stop most mice from entering the facility. However, it is often challenging to budget door sweep replacements for the whole school. Begin with 2 or 3 door sweeps in areas where rodent activity has occurred. Over the next years door sweeps can be added until the entire facility has properly installed sweeps.

**Leaf/Litter/Landscape**

Leaves and litter in landscape around schools protect rodents during their attempts to enter a facility. Less leaves and litter mean that rodents will have to shorten their visits in favor of safer areas. At the very least, make sure there is no accumulation of trash and plant material around the school. It would be better to replace ground spreading plants (such as yews), especially if the school is continually challenged by rodents. Loading docks and garbage dumpsters are particularly prone to having litter and food accumulate allowing a pest-friendly area.

**Check building for cracks and gaps**

Buildings that settle, new construction, utility lines (gas electric, etc.) into the building have gaps and cracks that open the school to pest invasion. All gaps and cracks 1/4” or more in diameter should be properly sealed. An annual inspection and rechecks whenever pests occur will ensure that pests are not entering the school. Remember, some of these cracks and gaps may be underground and in the foundation.

**Inspect classrooms for rodent activity**

Prior to the start of the school year, make sure there are no active rodent infestations in the school. With a flashlight, inspect corners, cupboards and behind equipment for the signs of rodent activity. Mouse droppings will likely be the first indication that a rodent is present. Remember “ledges, edges and lines (Oh my)!”: pests prefer to travel around the room perimeters and along edges, staying hidden as much as possible.

**Control Methods:**

If you have a rodent infestation you should work with your pest management professional to create a plan for eliminating rodent activity in your facility. In addition to using traps you should eliminate the things in the environment that are attracting the rodents. Removing food, water and harborage is a very important step.
The most common and effective way to control rodents is with traps. There are some important things to remember when trapping rodents:

- Traps should be placed in pairs and along ledges, edges and lines.
- A common mistake in mouse control is to set too few traps. Traps should be set in areas of rodent activity, but also in adjacent areas detect presence of hidden mice.
- When you see a rodent in a school, this animal may be living on the fringes of a larger infestation. Careful inspection is necessary to ensure a larger infestation is not occurring. Continued trapping may be necessary to ensure all mice are harvested.
- Look above false ceilings (if present) for droppings. This is an area often used by mice, but seldom checked by people.
- Rodents (even mice) may recognize and avoid traps. You should use a variety of trap baits to attract rodents. It may be necessary to keep traps unset so that mice become reliant on this new food source. Working with your pest management professional to establish a trapping plan will ensure the highest rate of success.