



CBCnews

Rats, rats and more rats: exterminators say number on the rise in Toronto

Rats, with their long, spindly tails and sharp front teeth, can be seen scurrying downtown

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Rat spotted in David Pecaut Square near King and John Streets in downtown Toronto. (Bruce Reeve/CBC)

Several exterminators say the number of rats in Toronto is on the rise and one pest control officer is blaming the rodent population boom on a combination of construction projects in the city and the mild winter.

Avery Addison, general manager of Addison Pest Control, says his company has received 10 times the number of rat removal calls this year as compared to the same time last year. Many have been residential calls.

"We are seeing a lot of rats this season. It seems to be far worse than recent years," he said. "I think part of the increase could be due to warmer year we've had."

Addison said warmer conditions mean the rats have more time to find food, eat and reproduce. "The extreme cold can kill them off."

He said construction projects can displace large numbers of rats, particularly if an old building that contains a rat population is torn down. He said the Union Station renovation, for example, dispersed "huge numbers" into the city.

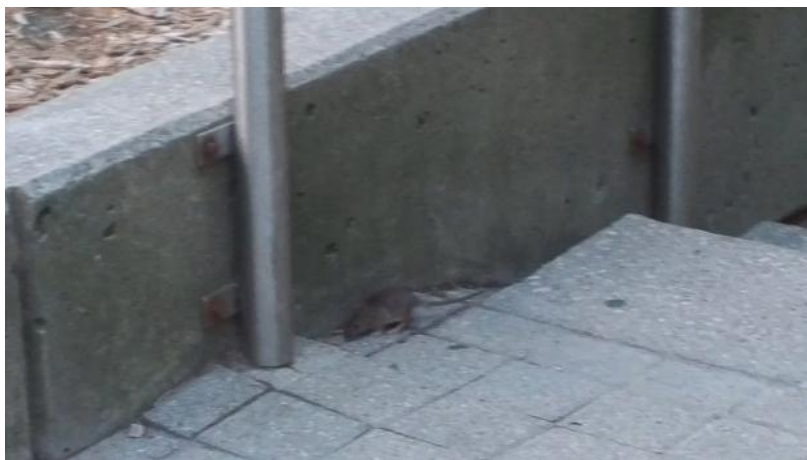
Toronto's rat population is rising, exterminators say. One says warmer conditions mean the rats have had more time to find food, eat and breed. (Larry Guerriero/CBC)

"Rats are vermin. They get into dirty places," he said.

Witnesses have seen more than a dozen rats scurrying around several buildings near the Rogers Centre at Front and John Streets in downtown Toronto.

But city officials told CBC News they do not track the number of rats that call Toronto home.

They said Municipal Licensing and Standards would investigate if a resident were to file a complaint regarding property standards and Toronto Public Health would investigate if rats were to make an appearance in restaurants.



Rats, with their long, spindly tails and sharp front teeth can be seen scurrying around near Front and John Streets in downtown Toronto. (Larry Guerriero/CBC)

Addison says it's important to check your house for any possible ways a rat could enter the premises.

"You'd be surprised how small of a hole they need to get in," he said. "Sometimes it's a matter of luck. You leave the garage door or front door open for a few moments while you are bringing in groceries and one could scurry in."

Addison said if residents see a rat in a house, they should get help before it reproduces. He said residents should check the exterior of houses for small openings and should check garage doors that aren't flush with the ground.

"Catch it early. It can get worse quickly."