

■ Rat Clean-Up



RATS. NEW YORK CITY is overrun by them. And, unfortunately, rats are found in far too many of the locations where Local 237 members work.

■ HOW CAN RATS AND OTHER RODENTS AND PESTS MAKE ME SICK?

Rats and other rodents and pests can make you sick in several ways. *They make you sick from direct contact with them, such as:*

- Bites
- Scratches

They can also make you sick from indirect contact with them, such as:

- Exposure to feces or urine* from fleas that feed off them and become infected

Many agencies have exterminators whose job is to kill the rats and other rodents. Cleaning up the dead rats may be someone else's job. If cleaning up rodents is one of your job tasks, it is important to make sure that you are protected from any health or safety risks.

■ WHAT ILLNESSES CAN I GET FROM RATS, RODENTS AND OTHER PESTS?

- Allergies
 - Watery and itchy eyes
 - Sneezing
 - Stuffy nose
 - Skin rash
- Viruses and infections

You are at higher risk for diseases if you are:

- HIV positive or
- Take steroids or certain cancer drugs or
- Have had your spleen removed

■ HOW CAN I PROTECT MYSELF DURING CLEAN-UP?

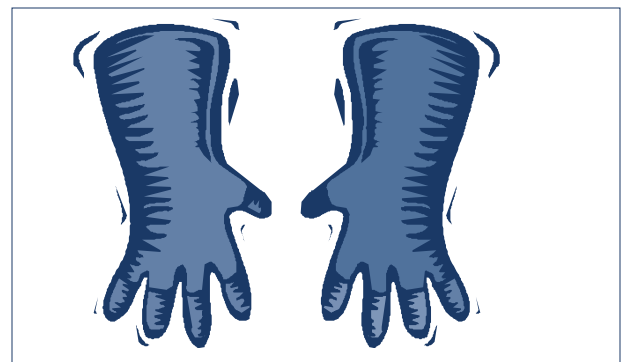
The following guidelines are from the US Centers for Disease Control (CDC):

After the extermination has been completed, a

clean-up should be done. Before the clean-up, air out the space for at least 30 minutes.

Step 1: Clean up urine and droppings

Because the urine or droppings themselves can spread disease, it is very important to be protected when you are cleaning up. Do not sweep or vacuum these materials. Sweeping or vacuuming can stir up the dust and make it easier to breathe in the materials.



When cleaning up urine and droppings:

- Wear rubber or vinyl gloves.
- Spray the urine and droppings with a mixture of 1 part of bleach and 10 parts of water (or other disinfectant). Let the disinfectant soak for 5 minutes before you pick up the waste.
- Use a paper towel to pick up the waste and put it in plastic bags.
- Disinfect any items that might have been contaminated.
- Mop or clean the general area that had been contaminated.

Step 2: Clean up dead rats and other rodents

Precautions must be taken when cleaning up rats and rodents.

- Spray the rats and the surrounding area with a mixture of 1 part of bleach and 10 parts of water (or other disinfectant). Let the disinfectant soak for five minutes before you pick up the rodent or wipe up the area.

- Put the rodent and the paper towels or other rags in a plastic bag and seal it tightly. Place that bag into a second bag and seal it tightly.
- Make sure the sealed plastic bags are placed in covered containers and that they are disposed of quickly.

Step 3: Clean up areas with heavy infestation

When the rat population has gotten out of control and there has been a major extermination job, there are special precautions to take when cleaning up afterward.

Often, the best course of action is for your employer to call in specialists to clean up these jobs. Whoever cleans up, though, should take the following precautions:

- Wear the right protective clothing.
 - coveralls
 - rubber boots or shoe covers
 - rubber or vinyl gloves
 - goggles

Where possible, disposable clothing should be used. If disposable clothing is not used, all gear should be decontaminated at the end of the day. Clothing or other material that is covered with waste that is not washed off should be double-bagged in plastic bags and labeled as infectious waste. That waste must be disposed of according to all regulations for transporting and throwing it away.

Wear the right respirator. A dust mask does not provide enough protection. Everyone working in these conditions should have at least a half-face respirator with HEPA (bright pink) filters. Before assigning you to use this respirator, your employer must have a full respirator program. The respirator program must include:

- assessment of hazards
- selection of proper respirator
- medical clearance
- fit testing
- training

- maintenance and care of respirators
- recordkeeping and evaluation of program

WHAT SHOULD MY EMPLOYER DO TO PROTECT ME?

Your employer must protect you from exposure to the diseases that rats and other pests can cause. They must:

- Train you to identify risky exposures.
- Give you the proper gloves, coveralls, goggles and other clothing you need to protect yourself.
- Give you a respirator, when necessary. When they give you a respirator, they must follow all of the rules (listed above).
- Provide medical evaluation and care, when necessary, if you are exposed to animal waste.



PESH WHAT THE LAW REQUIRES

PESH has several standards that apply during rodent clean up:

Housekeeping/Sanitation: 1910.141

Personal Protective Equipment:
1910.132 – 1910.138

