

BCIT SAFETY, SECURITY AND EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT – SAFETY NOTICE

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BRITISH COLUMBIA
INSTITUTE OF
TECHNOLOGY

SAFETY, SECURITY
AND EMERGENCY
MANAGEMENT

bcit.ca/safetyandsecurity/



Mouse Information

Increased rodent activity has been observed at BCIT and throughout the lower mainland as a result from highway construction and as lower temperatures drive rodents indoors in search of food and shelter. WorkSafeBC performed an inspection and has issued an inspection report. The report can be accessed through QuickPlace at the link below.

http://workplace.bcit.ca/QuickPlace/sas/Main.nsf/h_BC1D64B7B5ED6C378825793A006A7E4B/977EF08C7175D9CC8825793A006A72C1/?OpenDocument&Form=h_PageUI&StartAtLastPage

Objectives of Notice

- To provide the BCIT community with accurate information concerning the risk of exposures to mice.
- To inform staff on control measures to limit mouse activity in their workspaces.
- To outline the procedure for notifying BCIT Facilities Management of mouse sightings and cleaning requests.

The Common Mouse

- The most abundant mammal on earth.
- The adult mouse has a small slender body weighing from ½-ounce to an ounce.
- They have large, scantily haired ears; small black protruding eyes; a slightly pointed nose; and rows of scale ringing their long, tapered, sparsely furred tail.
- They usually have light brown to gray or black fur, with white or buff fur underneath.
- Their life span is 9-18 months.
- Mice will nest in any hidden area near a source of food.
- If food is available, a mouse will normally travel no more than 10-50 feet from their nest.
- When available, human food is often eaten in preference to seeds and grain.
- Mice are naturally curious, and do not hesitate to sample new foods.

Mouse Droppings/Urine

- Mice droppings are smooth with pointed ends, and are 1/8th to 1/4 inch long.
- The most common way mice transmit disease organisms is by contaminating food with their droppings and/or urine.
- Mice may infect food with their droppings transmitting organisms such as salmonella and the microscopic eggs of tapeworms.
- Other transmittable organisms include
 - Infectious jaundice/leptospirosis/Weil's Disease via urine in food or water
 - Favus, a fungus disease of the scalp, by direct contact with mice
 - Parasites such as fleas, round worms and mites

Mouse Information

What about Hantavirus?

It can't be emphasized enough that Hantavirus pulmonary syndrome is an extremely rare illness, the risk of contracting it is very low as the virus is rarely transmitted to humans.

- The only confirmed carrier of hantavirus is the deer mouse.
- Humans can be infected with hantavirus if they are exposed to grossly contaminated situations (e.g. large accumulations of deer mouse droppings in garages, sheds or barns).
- The mice found on BCIT campus are NOT deer mice.
- Since 1994 there have only been about 50 cases across Canada of humans contracting Hantavirus.
- Most cases were attributed to large exposures with individuals cleaning out rural buildings, trapping and studying mice, and performing farm related activities.
- The virus is usually spread to humans when particles of infected saliva, urine or feces are inhaled.
- While transmission to humans is rare, the virus can cause a severe illness, Hantavirus pulmonary syndrome.

BCIT Pest Management Program

- BCIT Facilities has a long standing pest control program with a contracted Pest Control Company with technicians onsite daily.
- The program includes: extensive interior and exterior baiting and trapping, landscaping to limit and control nesting opportunities, office cleaning by our custodial contractor and efforts by Facilities staff to seal points of entry into our buildings.
- A successful control program requires reporting of rodent sightings, excretions and carcasses to Facilities.

How can I limit mouse activity in my workspace?

- Do not store food and water at your desk.
- Do not eat at your desk.
- Routinely wipe down your workspace to limit any accumulation of food debris. (Disinfectant wipes are available from Supply Management)
- Remove all plants and sources of soil from the work place.
- Store paper and other nesting materials in file cabinets and sealed document containers.
- Unplug appliances such as printers as the heat from such will attract rodents.
- If you see mouse activity or evidence of nesting please inform the Facilities group by phone (8777) or an online work request.

What about my garbage?

- The office mini bin system relies on the office occupant to empty their own office bin into the central office garbage container as required and to place food waste directly into central office garbage - which is then emptied daily by our custodial staff.
- Custodial staff clean and disinfect the office mini bins biweekly during the regular office cleaning cycle, however food waste should never be discarded into the office mini bin.

Mouse Information

Removal/Cleaning of mouse excretions or carcasses

- If you see mouse excretions in your work area, please notify your supervisor and Facilities by phone 8777 or online work request.
- These requests are a priority and every effort will be made by Facilities to respond immediately to remove the excretions and disinfect the work area.
- If Staff choose to clean up small amounts of mouse droppings, this can be performed safely by following the procedure below.
- All necessary supplies can be attained by your department from Supply Management Group
 - Put on gloves.
 - Use bleach containing disinfectant wipe to remove droppings and wipe up urine.
 - Use a second wipe to wipe down the surrounding area .
 - Place all items and gloves in a central garbage receptacle.
 - Practice hand hygiene with warm water and soap.
 - If papers and documents have been contaminated with mouse excretions or urine, use the bleach disinfectant wipes to wet the excretions and dispose of the documents.
- Large amounts of contamination should be left undisturbed, contact Facilities to arrange for cleaning request.
- If you see a trapped rodent, do not touch it, please notify your supervisor and Facilities.

Safety Note When Using Disinfectant

- Precautions should be taken when using bleach or disinfectant products.
- Review the MSDS of the product before use.
- Such products will irritate eyes and skin with prolonged exposures.
- This products will damage clothing
- Use gloves and avoid splashes to the face.
- Wash hands after use

Health and Safety Questions?

For any further health and safety concerns or questions related to mice or other please contact the OHS Group:

Bcit_occupational_health_&_safety@bcit.ca