

Pests and vermin

This fact sheet explains how to prevent pests and vermin from entering your home and what to do if they become a problem.

What are pests and vermin?

Pests and vermin include animals and insects such as:

- ants
- cockroaches
- mice
- millipedes
- rats
- silverfish
- spiders.

Why are they a problem?

These types of animals and insects can cause damage to the home. They may also be a risk to health. If the problem gets out of control and you do not fix it, you may be asked to move out of your home.

What are the rules?

Local council rules say that all homes and public spaces must be healthy and safe. This means that all homes must be free of pests and vermin.

If your local council says that your home has a problem with pests and vermin, they can ask you to move out. They may also say that the home is unhealthy for the neighbours living near you. It means you are breaking your lease with Homes Tasmania.

People who live in Homes Tasmania homes are responsible for making sure they do not have any of these uninvited guests staying with them. Your lease agreement says that you must keep your home free of pests and vermin. Homes Tasmania will ask you to fix the problem. If you do not take action to fix the problem, Homes Tasmania may ask you to leave.

How to prevent pests and vermin?

Keeping your home clean, tidy and well-aired is the best way to prevent pests and vermin. There are other ways to prevent problems with pests and vermin.

- Always throw food scraps out straight away. Do not leave any wrappers or containers lying around.
- Do not leave any food on tables, on benches, in bedrooms or on floors, especially overnight.
- Clean up spills immediately, especially sugary drinks or honey.
- Use a bin liner in your rubbish bin. You may like to use plastic bags for this if they fit your bin.
- Empty your bin regularly, especially if it is overflowing or is starting to smell.
- Keep your wheelie bin in a well-aired place. Make sure you are using bin liners or plastic bags for your rubbish – do not just throw rubbish straight into the wheelie bin.
- Put your wheelie bin out for collection every week.
- Open windows and use extractor fans when cooking.
- Keep the food in your pantry in sealed containers.
- Keep your yard tidy.
- Check underneath your home.
- Make sure you don't have piles of clothes, towels or sheets lying around. They make a good home for mice and rats.
- Make sure any pets you have are kept clean, and that you clean up after them, even if they do their toileting outside.
- Clean any pet food bowls regularly. Unwanted pet food can attract pests and vermin.

Remember that you need to get permission from Homes Tasmania if you want to keep a pet.

What if pests and vermin become a problem?

If pests and vermin become a problem, you need to take action.

For smaller problems, there are plenty of products available in the supermarket to manage pests and vermin.

These include:

- mouse traps
- sprays and other products to control ants and insects
- steel wool for plugging up holes – this is good for preventing mice and rats, as they cannot chew through the metal.

You may need to call an exterminator. You need to pay for the exterminator. Homes Tasmania will not pay.

If you have large gaps in your home, you should contact Homes Tasmania. This may be a problem with the foundations of the home, and you need to report this issue.

What if pests and vermin damage my property?

If your home is damaged by pests and vermin, you need to fix it. This work must be done to a professional standard.

If damage remains, or if the repair work is not done properly, Homes Tasmania may ask you to repair the home again.

If you move out and the damage is left behind, we will ask for you to pay to have it fixed.

Paul's story

Paul noticed a small hole in the wall, near the floor, in the laundry at his house. He didn't really know what to do about it, so he ignored it. Unfortunately, it was a mouse hole. Before Paul knew it, mice were breeding at his home. They enjoyed feasting on Paul's overflowing rubbish bin.

One day, they chewed through the cable that connected Paul's phone and internet. He was annoyed when the phone company charged him more than \$300 to fix the problem. He decided to do something about the mice.

He bought some traps at the supermarket. He stuffed the hole with steel wool so they couldn't get into the house anymore. He also emptied his rubbish bin more frequently. And he made sure he wasn't leaving any food lying around to attract them.

More information

Call Housing Tasmania 1300 665 663

Email Homes Tasmania tenancyservices@homes.tas.gov.au