

Disposal of Rodenticides

RODENTICIDES (rodent poisons) are sometimes used to manage rats and mice in B.C. They are generally formulated as baits to attract and kill rodents. If not properly disposed of, the toxic chemicals in the rodenticide waste (unwanted, moldy or partly consumed bait) can pose a serious risk to humans, pets and wildlife.

Rodenticides containing the active ingredients warfarin, chlorophacinone, diphacinone, bromadiolone, difethialone, or brodifacoum are a particularly high risk if disposed of improperly. These active ingredients are anticoagulants which stop normal blood clotting, resulting in internal bleeding. Check your rodenticide label for these active ingredients, and always read and follow the label instructions.



Examples of rodenticides (solid block and soft bait) frequently used in and around B.C. structures.

A 2019 compliance audit of structural pesticide users found that rodenticide waste is routinely disposed of in household garbage.¹ **Disposing of rodenticides in household garbage is not a best practice.** It is important that anyone using rodenticides knows how to safely dispose of the waste to minimize risk to people, pets and wildlife.

In B.C., the Integrated Pest Management Act (IPMA) mandates the proper disposal of pesticides, including rodenticides. It states that pesticides must be disposed of according to the product label directions or the manufacturer's instructions. But many rodenticide labels contain wording such as: "For information on the disposal of unused, unwanted product, contact the provincial regulatory agency or the manufacturer." This can make it difficult for people to know how to properly get rid of their rodenticide waste.

This factsheet contains suggestions to minimize risk from rodenticide waste, including proper disposal.

1. REDUCE – Aim for zero or minimal waste

- Use an integrated pest management (IPM) program that limits the use of rodenticides
 - » Prevent pests first with housekeeping and rodent-proofing²
 - » Consider products with lesser environmental impacts like snap traps or rodenticides with the active ingredient corn cellulose
- If using rodenticides, carefully figure out how much you will need. Choose mold-resistant baits when possible by checking the product label
- Use up the rodenticides you have in stock unless they are deteriorated or no longer registered for use
 - » Use the Health Canada Product Label Search to see if your rodenticide is still registered for use³

2. REUSE – Keep for future use

- Keep unused baits in a secure location (locked, signed and vented)



In 2020, a bear ate this commercial class rodenticide bait after it was dumped in a wooded area. A Powell River Conservation Officer recovered five containers of the bait.

3. RECYCLE – Give to a licensed pest control operator

- Give your unwanted bait to a person that is qualified to use it. Many commercial class rodenticides are labeled for use only by certified applicators, farmers and staff in government pest control programs
 - » **Talk to a licenced pest control operator in your area and ask if they might accept it**
- Be sure the product you give away is in its original packaging with labeling intact. Do not repackaging or distribute product otherwise
- Licensees that sell surplus rodenticide to another licensee must notify the Ministry of Environment and Climate Change Strategy

4. RETURN – Take to the supplier

- Return your unused rodenticides in their original containers to the vendor you bought them from. Call beforehand to ask about this option



Example of an original rodenticide container with intact label.

5. RETIRE – Dispose safely

- Don't throw out rodenticides with household garbage. It is unsafe. Local bylaws may also prohibit rodenticides from curbside pickup
- Find a household hazardous waste collection site near you or watch for collection events occurring in your area
- Return Domestic class rodenticides with the poison symbol on their label to a Product Care Recycling depot⁴
- For Commercial class rodenticides, contact your local government for disposal options. If you are a farmer or commercial pest control operator, bring your unwanted rodenticides to a Cleanfarms collection event⁵
- Follow label instructions for the proper removal and disposal of dead rodents found during your baiting program. Failure to do so increases the risk of secondary poisoning of other animals if they eat the poisoned rodents



In 2020, this great horned owl died after eating poisoned rodents near Victoria, B.C. (photo courtesy of Deanna Pfeifer).

RESOURCES

- 2019 Structural Pesticide Users: Compliance Audit Report, *Integrated Pest Management Act*: https://www2.gov.bc.ca/assets/gov/environment/pesticides-and-pest-management/pesticide-use/reports/2019_structural_pesticide_users_compliance_audit_report.pdf
- Tips for Managing Rodents: <https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content?id=3C07BC596C4C4FC1A9A70A51EE501CD2>
- Health Canada Product Label Search: <https://www.canada.ca/en/health-canada/services/consumer-product-safety/pesticides-pest-management/registrants-applicants/tools/pesticide-label-search.html>
- Product Care Recycling Depots: <https://www.productcare.org/products/hhw/british-columbia/>
- Cleanfarms Unwanted Pesticide Collection: <https://cleanfarms.ca/materials/unwanted-pesticides-animal-meds/>