



Rodent Control

This leaflet is designed for those who need to carry out rodent control in dwellings where bats roost, or are suspected to roost. It is specific to these works only and to no other works. If you require further information after reading this leaflet, please contact the Bat Conservation Trust (BCT).

Do I have bats?

Where a bat roost is suspected, it may be practical to undertake some initial investigations. You must take great care when seeking to identify a bat roost, firstly because of the safety issues of accessing lofts and other high spaces, and also because it is important not to disturb the bats when in their roost. When they are hibernating, if you do wake bats they will use up valuable energy stores, and through the maternity season, you can disturb bats with their babies.



Bat droppings are usually dry and crumble easily between your fingers to a powder.

Rodent droppings do not crumble. They quickly become hard.

You may see droppings on or around the property, particularly around possible bat access points. A bat dropping looks very similar to a rodent dropping, but will usually be very dry, and will crumble to dust under very little pressure. If you notice any droppings, a quick crumble test (with gloves or a tissue) is a good way to get an indication of bat presence. You could also check the loft, but do be wary of the presence of any bats and stop immediately if you suspect any are there.

Another way to identify bats is to perform what we call emergence and/or re-entry surveys. During summer months (May-September) you should be able to see bats more frequently. You will find some tips on carrying out these surveys in our leaflet *Living with bats*.

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Where a roost is present or suspected and rodents are also present, it is advisable to lay rodent bait when bats are not present, if at all possible. Care should be taken to minimise any disturbance caused to the bats, particularly during the critical hibernation period (November to February) and breeding season (May to September). Ideally work should be timed for **between March and April, or September/October**, when any baby bats will have been weaned, and the bats will not have entered hibernation yet.

- Provide a copy of this leaflet to the pest control operative for them to follow. Inform them of the presence of a roost and that there is always the possibility of bats being present in loft spaces any time of year.
- Working in line with the CRRU code of practice and following product label directions;
 - Use bait bags or enclosed forms of bait (e.g. wax blocks in bait stations) only.
 - Distribute the appropriate number of bait bags/bait stations throughout the roof void at floor level only.*
- Take care not to disturb any bats when laying fresh bait or when removing old/unused bait and dead rodents. Access the loft only when necessary and allow any bats access to an undisturbed area at all times.

- Keep noise to a minimum and avoid shining lights at ridge level where bats are most likely to be.
- Take care underfoot as bats can be found at any level of the roof space (including ceiling joists) where they are in danger of being stepped on.

** Before embarking on a baiting programme, the pest controller should read the product label carefully and follow the instructions given to ensure that the correct, legal and safe procedure for that specific product is followed.*

Please **do not** use;

- Open trays of rodenticide or loose bait. If bats should come into contact with the poison there is a risk they could ingest it.
- Spring, cage or sticky traps as these can kill and injure bats.
- Ultrasonic deterrent devices anywhere near to a bat roost. Little is known as to their effect on bats and the use of them may be classified as disturbance.

Sealing gaps to prevent entry by rodents

You may also wish to minimise the number of places where rodents can get in. This might involve blocking up holes at ground level, for example, around pipes and ventilation bricks. If the hole has a ventilation purpose, please seek appropriate advice before starting any work. Sometimes a fine metal mesh can be used to retain adequate ventilation whilst preventing rodent access.

Please note however that bat access points from the roost to the exterior of your property or gaps used by bats to access from one loft space to another must be left clear (see Bats & the Law section below). If you are at all unsure whether blocking a hole could affect the bats at all, please contact your Statutory Nature Conservation Organisation (SNCO) or an ecological consultant before taking any action.

Bats & the Law

As population numbers have fallen, all bats and their roosts are protected under The Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended) and The Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017. Bats use roosts on a seasonal basis and therefore bat roosts are protected whether the bats are in occupation or not.

Under these pieces of legislation it is illegal to:

- deliberately capture (or take), injure or kill a bat;
- intentionally, recklessly or deliberately disturb a bat (in relation to the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended) the offence applies whilst the species is occupying a structure or place which it uses for shelter or protection; in relation to the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 it applies anywhere);
- damage or destroy the breeding or resting place (roost) of a bat;
- possess a bat (alive or dead), or any part of a bat;
- intentionally or recklessly obstruct access to a bat roost;
- sell (or offer for sale) or exchange bats (alive or dead), or parts of bats.

Your Statutory Nature Conservation Organisation (SNCO)

If you need to undertake any works that may affect your roost, it is recommended that you take the necessary precautions by seeking advice on how to do works lawfully. This advice can be provided by the Statutory Nature Conservation Organisation (SNCO) for your country, or through an ecological consultant.

England:	Natural England (via BCT)	0345 1300 228
Northern Ireland:	Northern Ireland Environment Agency	028 9039 5264
Scotland:	Scottish Natural Heritage	01463 725 165 / batsinhouses@snh.gov.uk
Wales:	Natural Resources Wales	0300 065 3000 (ask for the species team)

The Bat Conservation Trust (known as BCT) is a registered charity in England and Wales (1012361) and in Scotland (SC040116).

Registered office: Quadrant House, 250 Kennington Lane, London SE11 5RD
 Email: enquiries@bats.org.uk National Bat Helpline: 0345 1300 228