

How to Reduce Rats Around Outdoor Dining

If your restaurant is offering outdoor dining, you must take steps to control rats and other pests. Restaurants are responsible for managing rats around their dining structures, including when rats have made nests (also known as burrows) into adjacent street trees. Follow these best practices to keep your dining space and any surrounding street trees rat-free.

Clean Every Day

- Quickly clean up and discard any spilled food. Rats only need an ounce of food a day to survive, so be sure to clean thoroughly. Remember that pest-related violations in the outdoor dining area count toward your inspection letter grade.
- Wash all outdoor dining areas, including the space underneath a raised platform. Also, be sure to wash the sidewalks and curbs around your restaurant every evening after closing and again before opening with soap and water or a 10% bleach solution (1 cup of bleach to 2 gallons of water). This particular bleach solution formula cannot be used for food contact surfaces.
- Power-wash underneath the structure to flush out any rats and discourage nesting beneath the structure.
- Remove any standing water.

Manage Your Garbage

- Line garbage containers with heavy-duty plastic bags. Place a rag soaked with a 10% bleach solution at the bottom and top of each bag before tying the bag tightly to reduce leakage.
- Make sure you have enough garbage containers to hold garbage between pickups and that each container has a tight-fitting lid.
- Bring garbage to the curb as close to pickup time as possible. Garbage and recycling should not be on the curb for more than two hours. Arrange specific pickup times with your carrier to reduce the time garbage is on the curb and available to rats.

Inspect Every Day

- Inspect the outdoor dining space, garbage area, planters or street trees daily to make sure they are clean and that there is no food residue or signs of rats.
- Use a flashlight to inspect the area underneath your dining shed.
- If you find signs of rat activity, such as droppings or burrows, have your pest professional thoroughly inspect and service the structure.

Work With a Licensed Pest Professional

- Restaurant operators are required to have a contract with a licensed pest professional to control pests inside the restaurant. Work with your pest professional to control rats in your outdoor dining area.
- Make sure the company you hire is licensed with the New York State Department of