

# THE KANSAS CITY STAR.

## **Kansas City rats are getting big, and the infestation problem is growing**

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DECEMBER 12, 2017 03:28 PM

UPDATED DECEMBER 12, 2017 04:13 PM

The supervisor of rat control for Kansas City says we have a problem — a “very large problem.”

Calls to the the Kansas City Health Department to report rats have doubled since two years ago, according to Michael Swoyer. This year, the office is on track to receive 2,400 calls. Two years ago, it received just 1,200.

“It’s always a health issue. Rats do carry diseases, and they do cause damage to homes,” Swoyer said. “Rats can reproduce quickly, so it’s best to get to the rat problem as soon as possible.”

He added that the type of rats in the KC area “like to dig holes and like to be low,” so he advised checking basements and other underground areas periodically for rat infestations.

The government’s American Housing Survey placed the Kansas City Missouri-Kansas metro area sixth out of the 25 most-populous metros in the United States when it comes to rats and mice seen in homes.

Julie Hensler, a resident of Brookside Park, said a bad stench coming from her basement led to the discovery of a dead rat. She fears there is a nest in a crawlspace.

“I’m mortified,” she said.

Adriene Norton, who lives near Waldo, said she often sees rats in her yard.

“They are regularly about a foot long. They’re big. ... I thought they were rabbits at first,” she said, but they “don’t come in the house. They just have their rat parties outside.”

Swoyer said several factors have contributed to the problem, such as illegal dumping, people leaving food and water outside, and a large number of construction sites throughout the city.

Fox4 reports the city’s rat control program has hired an exterminator who will perform free services to those in single-family homes or duplexes.

Contact the program at 816-513-6010.

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The rat problem in Kansas City has grown this year, according to Michael Swoyer, a rat control supervisor for the KC Health Department. AP file photo