

Rodent control when going mobile

By Joseph Parish

One of the primary concerns that you will have if you decide to join the mobile society will be the control of mice and other annoying rodents in your camper. When one considers the initial cost of these units, it almost insults your sense of value when you see how really cheap these campers are constructed. One would expect a bit more quality in both the construction and the workmanship, but we have to make due with what we have before us.

Campers are seldom built to be rodent proof, and if you are like me you really have no hankering to discover mice crawling in bed with you at night. When you first get your camper make a complete inspection of it. Make the unit as tight as you possibly can. Unfortunately the camper manufacturers are not in the least concerned about the problem of mice entering your unit. If properly sealed you will eliminate the majority of the mice right on the spot.

Rodent control becomes particularly important when you are out in the boondocks and in the process of becoming self sufficient. Unfortunately the pests are just part of the real estate when you elect this manner of living. Of the million plus Americans who have become full-time mobile citizens most have at one time or another had to deal with small infestations of mice. The key is to strike back immediately before it gets out of hand.

You will find it to be extremely important that you keep your camper living space tightly sealed making certain that all areas where the plumbing and wiring penetrate the interior is carefully sealed as well as all the doors and window fittings. A mouse is capable of getting through a hole which is a mere eighth of an inch wide and only an inch across. These animals are amazing in that they can actually articulate their skull and ribs in order to squeeze into a tight space. Even a fully grown adult rat requires only a quarter of an inch to obtain entrance. If not properly sealed you can rest assured that you will hear them scurrying around in your living space. Even if you do manage to completely seal your camper, chances are great that you will still hear them moving about in the camper frame occasionally. It is however extremely comforting to know that they won't invade your inside living space.

Food storage areas are likely to become a popular target with not only insects, but rodents as well. The best way for you to minimize these effects is to maintain your entire dry foodstuff in some sort of closeable metallic container. Plastic totes and bins are not a particularly effective means of storage when in the open. Mice have been known to chew their way inside in order to get to the food.

The best means to controlling pests is to keep a well organized and clean house particularly around your food supplies and its associated preparation area.

A valuable tip to keep in mind whether you are in a private location or boondocking is to avoid what is known as rodent nests. Make sure prior to setting up your camp that you do

not park your camper in any large accumulation of leaf litter or near a considerable number of branches piled on the ground. If you suspect ground squirrels to be in the area look around for large visible burrows. Glance at any grassy areas as well for small burrows. Rodents can be very destructive on your camper wiring harnesses and propane hoses. Although chipmunks or squirrels will seldom present you with a problem mice will invade your camper the first night you are parked if they are hungry enough.

I am a fan of the brute force method of eliminating mice. No more Mr. Nice Guy for me. I always place mouse poison in many of the storage areas of the camper as well as on the ground underneath. So far this is the only proven method of elimination. In the near future I intend to experiment with the electronic pest repellers and see how well they work. Needless to say I will promptly report the results of the tests on the website.

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