



APPLETON HEALTH DEPARTMENT

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To: Board of Health

From: Charles E Sepers, Jr, PhD, MPH, Health Officer, and Director

Date: March 3, 2024

Subject: Amendment to Rodent Control Article III - Removal of Health Department Responsibility for Rat Infestation Mitigation

Dear Board Members,

I am writing to inform you of the proposed amendments to Article III of our rat control regulations, focusing on rodent control within the City. These changes are pivotal in updating our approach to rat infestation management and clarifying the responsibilities of property owners and managers in these scenarios.

The primary amendment involves the removal of the Health Department's responsibility for baiting and exterminating rats on residential premises. Historically, upon verification of rat infestation, the Health Department was tasked with placing bait outside structures to exterminate rats. The revised regulation shifts this responsibility entirely to property owners or managers, requiring them to address and exterminate any rat infestations found on their premises. This change aims to enhance efficiency in managing rat populations by involving property stakeholders directly in the mitigation efforts, while preserving the Health Department's authority to address rodent infestations within the City through the issuance of orders and fees in the event of violation.

This change also eliminates the need for Health Department staff to maintain the Certified Pest Control Operator credential, resulting in an operational savings to the City. Additionally, by shifting the responsibility of mitigating rat infestation to property owners, this also eliminates the need for purchasing, maintaining, and storing restricted use pesticides. These chemicals are costly and increase the City's liability of injury. Eliminating the need for buying and storing these pesticides constitutes an additional opportunity for cost savings to the City. Further, the frequency of which the Department has responded in accordance with Sec. 7-70 has been low and does not warrant further maintenance of this capability.

The rationale behind these changes is to streamline the process of rat infestation management by making property owners more accountable for maintaining their premises free from rat harborage and ensuring swift action is taken to mitigate any infestations. By removing the Health Department's direct involvement in baiting and extermination, we aim to allocate our resources more effectively towards oversight, compliance, and education on rodent control practices.

We believe that these amendments will significantly contribute to a more effective and sustainable rat control strategy within our city. Your support in implementing these changes is crucial for their success.

Please feel free to reach out if you require further details or have any questions regarding the proposed amendments.

Best regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'CES', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Charles E Sepers, Jr, PhD, MPH
Health Officer | Director
Appleton Health Department