



# GOOD SAFE PRACTICES

Northern Region Safety & Occupational Health

MARCH 2012

## HANTAVIRUS PROTECTION



It is the time of the year when we start doing our spring cleaning, opening cabins, and working in stations and sheds. Therefore we need to take precautions before and during cleanup of rodent-infested areas to prevent any **Hantavirus** infections. Before cleaning is attempted, you must trap all rodents and seal up any entryways to ensure that no rodents can reenter. Continue this trapping for a week. Before starting cleanup, ventilate the space by opening the doors and windows for at least 30 minutes to allow fresh air to enter the area. Ensure there is cross-ventilation and leave the area during the airing-out period. When you begin cleaning, **it is important that you do not stir up dust by sweeping or vacuuming up droppings, urine, or nesting materials.** Be sure to wear rubber, latex, or vinyl gloves when cleaning urine and droppings. Spray the urine and droppings with a disinfectant or a mixture of bleach and water and let soak 5 minutes. The recommended concentration of bleach mixture is for cleaning is **1 part bleach to 10 parts water or 1 to 9 for dead mice and nests.** Use a paper towel to pick up the urine and droppings, and dispose of all the waste in the garbage. After the rodent droppings and urine have been removed, disinfect items that might have been contaminated by rodents or their urine and droppings (keeping your PPE on). Mop floors and clean countertops with disinfectant or bleach solution. Steam clean or shampoo upholstered furniture and carpets that show evidence of rodent exposure. Wash any bedding and clothing with laundry detergent in hot water if exposed to rodent urine or droppings (you may need a professional service). Lastly, remove gloves, and thoroughly wash hands with soap and water (or use a waterless alcohol-based hand rub when soap is not available and hands are not visibly soiled). **Please note that a dust mask may provide some protection against dust, but does not protect against viruses.**



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Attics, basements crawl spaces, other storage and areas of heavy rodent infestation can require professional service and with more specialized PPE (appropriate respiratory protection, coveralls, etc.).



When dealing with air ducts heating and cooling ventilation systems, it is best to contact a professional rodent exterminating. Mickey and Minnie might be cute, but their wild relatives need to be treated with abundant caution.