Self Inspection
Start by taking a walk around the outside of your house or complex. You should be looking for:
- Open or broken windows and screens
- Voids in the staircase or wooden outdoor floorboards
- Cracks or holes in the foundation walls
- Gaps around piping or conduits
- Potential nesting sites under decks
- Loose fitting or damaged doors
- Damage or openings at corners of house
- Openings around chimney caps

Sanitation
Poor sanitation also provides food and favorable nesting sites for mice and rats. During your walk be sure to look out for:

**Outside**
- Open or loosely covered trash containers or dumpsters
- Overgrowth of shrubs, foliage or vegetation next to or near the house or complex
- Accumulation of wood, lumber or pipes
- Accumulation of debris, junk, rags, discarded bedding or furniture
- Poorly maintained compost bin
- Exposed pet food
- Poorly maintained bird feeders

**Inside**
- Accumulation of debris and junk in the attic, basement or crawl space
- Leaking pipes or broken spigots
- Open bags or containers of food
- General cleanliness

Elimination/Exclusion
After identifying problem areas, take the following measures to make your house or apartment complex uninviting to mice or rats:
- Install tight-fitting windows and screens
- Seal or remove voids in the staircase or wooden outdoor floor boards
- Seal any cracks or holes in the foundation walls
- Seal gaps around piping or conduits
- Seal open spaces under decks
- Repair or replace loose-fitting doors
- Repair any damaged areas of the doors with metal flashing
- Seal any openings on the house siding
- Screen openings around chimney caps
- Provide cleanable, tightly covered trash containers and dumpsters
- Maintain or remove any shrubs, foliage or vegetation
- Store wood, lumber or pipes at least 12 inches off the ground or dispose of properly
- Properly dispose of debris, rags, discarded bedding or furniture
- Follow the proper procedures for maintaining a compost bin
- Do not leave pet food sitting out. Provide tightly covered containers and properly discard the leftovers
- Bird seed should not be scattered on the ground

Contact your Area Sanitarian if you have any questions about your specific pest control problem.

Also see: Municipal Rodent Management on the Illinois Department of Public Health Web site.