

## Little Mice Lead to Big Problems

With the hotter weather, mice populations across the country have grown. Mice lead to three major problems:

- Mice spread diseases, such as hantavirus, through their droppings, urine, and saliva. The hantavirus is airborne—it is transmitted to people when they breathe air contaminated with the virus.
- Food contamination is another threat. Examine your food storage areas and procedures. Ask your kitchen staff to report mice dropping sightings to you immediately.
- Mice also present a fire safety issue when they chew through electrical wiring. If your building (particularly the dining hall) hasn't been used for a couple months, it's a good practice to station someone with a fire extinguisher to look and smell for smoke for about half an hour after the power is turned back on.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) provide these tips for cleaning up areas where mice are in evidence:

- When going into cabins or outbuildings that have been closed for awhile, open them up and air them out before cleaning.
- Wear latex rubber gloves before, during, and after clean up.
- Do not stir up dust by sweeping up or vacuuming up droppings, urine, or nesting materials.
- Instead, thoroughly wet contaminated areas with a liquid disinfectant or 10% bleach solution (1-1/2 cups bleach to 1 gallon water) to decontaminate the area.
- Once everything is wet, take up contaminated materials with a damp towel, then mop or sponge the area with disinfectant.
- Spray dead rodents with disinfectant, then double-bag along with all cleaning materials and bury or burn—or throw out in appropriate waste disposal system.
- Finally, disinfect gloves before taking them off. After taking off the clean gloves, thoroughly wash hands with soap and warm water.