



Deck Rodent-Proofing Checklist

Everything you need to specify, install and check a rat-proof deck — mesh spec, burial depths, airflow clearances and the sequence that stops the problem coming back. Print it, take it round the garden, tick as you go.

⚠ BEFORE ANYTHING ELSE — DON'T SEAL THEM IN

Never close gaps or burrows until you know what's using them and have a control plan in place. Sealing active rats inside the void increases damage, prompts fresh gnawing and makes the job far harder to put right. Signs of activity: **fresh droppings, disturbed soil, gnawing damage, scratching underfoot.**

STEP 1

Confirm whether anything is living under there. Don't block a single hole yet.

STEP 2

If active, get a qualified pest controller in and let them clear it properly.

STEP 3

Only then fit the exclusion barrier and make the void inhospitable.

1 GET THE MESH RIGHT

- **5 mm hole pattern** (TDCA recommendation) or **1/4 inch / 6 mm** — excludes both rats and mice. Rats need only a 15 mm gap, so don't go wider.
- **Welded at each joint, not twisted.** Welded mesh holds its shape under pressure and won't unravel if one strand is damaged.
- **Galvanised after welding** for real corrosion resistance in a wet North West garden.
- **16–19 gauge wire.** Costs more upfront, resists gnawing and lasts significantly longer.
- **Avoid:** aluminium or plastic screening (temporary deterrents only) and wire wool (corrodes fast — a short-term patch, not a fix).

2 INSTALL IT SO THEY CAN'T DIG UNDER

Method 1 — Vertical skirt with buried depth

300 mm

BURIED VERTICALLY (APPROX. 12")

Fit mesh into the ground around the deck edge to 300 mm. Secure the top tightly to the deck frame so there is no gap at the mesh-to-structure junction — that joint is where most retrofits fail.

Method 2 — L-shaped buried apron

150 mm

HORIZONTAL APRON (APPROX. 6")

Where a deep trench isn't practical: fix mesh vertically to the frame down to ground level, then bend it outward 150 mm at the base. Stake the apron flat and cover with soil or gravel.

3 KEEP THE AIRFLOW — DON'T SUFFOCATE THE DECK

150 mm

Recommended clearance, soil to underside of frame

50 mm

Acceptable minimum where a low-level deck is required

Under 50 mm

Specify a recycled plastic subframe — rot-proof, nothing soft to gnaw

20%

Of skirting area kept open where a deck is fully boxed in

Any open edge will let air in. What separates a deck that stays dry from one that doesn't is where that air gets out — air under a deck warms, picks up ground moisture and rises, so it needs **two openings, not one:**

- **Intake** — low and open along the exposed edges, drawing cool air in across the gravel.
- **Exhaust** — high and unobstructed. Against the house, air rises out along the wall; butt a fascia hard to the brickwork and you've capped it. Freestanding decks need two opposite sides vented.

This is why the skirt must be mesh, not board. Exclusion is nearly always fitted to the intake edge — a solid skirt closes the only inlet the deck has, keeping rats out and moisture in.

Membrane and gravel underneath for drainage. Keep the deck surface below the damp-proof course, and that gap clear.

4 REMOVE WHAT DRAWS THEM IN

- ☐ Bird feeders moved well away from the deck; no-mess mix and a catch tray fitted
- ☐ No pet food left outside overnight — one bowl is enough to establish activity
- ☐ Bins lidded and secure; compost heap near the deck protected with wire mesh
- ☐ Deck perimeter cleared of overgrown planting, long grass and dense ground cover
- ☐ Wood piles, bricks and garden waste relocated away from the structure
- ☐ No standing water or dripping outside tap close to the deck edge
- ☐ Skip the gadgets — ultrasonic and electromagnetic repellers aren't rated by credible pest guidance

5 MAKE THE VOID INHOSPITABLE

- ☐ Weed-control fabric laid under the deck, topped with gravel or chippings
- ☐ Leaf litter and debris cleared from the void — repeat each autumn
- ☐ Vegetation-free strip maintained around the deck edge so movement is exposed
- ☐ Inspection hatch fitted — a liftable board so you can check the void without lifting fixings
- ☐ Hatch positioned near manholes or drain covers, where rats are most likely to be active
- ☐ Subframe checked for gnawing and rot — recycled plastic, aluminium and composite subframes offer far less harbourage than timber

6 FINAL SIGN-OFF BEFORE YOU CALL IT DONE

- ☐ Mesh is 5 mm / 6 mm, welded, galvanised after welding, 16–19 gauge — checked against the spec, not the label on the shelf
- ☐ Mesh runs the full perimeter with no unmeshed returns, steps, gate gaps or service penetrations left open
- ☐ Buried to 300 mm vertical or a 150 mm staked apron, and fixed tight to the frame along the whole top edge
- ☐ Ground clearance achieved — 150 mm where possible, 50 mm minimum, recycled plastic subframe below that
- ☐ Both an intake and an exhaust: the skirt is vented mesh, and the high side or house-wall junction is left open
- ☐ Diarised: re-check the void and perimeter every autumn, before rats start looking for winter cover

7 NOTES — MEASURE WHILE YOU'RE OUT THERE

DECK PERIMETER (M):

GROUND CLEARANCE (MM):

ACCESS — WHEELBARROW WIDTH?

PROBLEM CORNERS / DRAIN COVERS:

RATHER HAVE IT CHECKED PROPERLY?

Our **Deck Rodent-Proofing Survey** covers the void and subframe, identifies exactly how they're getting in, and gives you a fixed written price — and the fee comes off in full against any work you book. Typical retrofit installs run **£1,200–£3,500** depending on deck perimeter and access.

Call **0151 808 5102** — covering Merseyside, Cheshire and the wider North West.

£95

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