



Medford City Council  
Medford, Massachusetts

**Public Health and Community Safety Committee, October 22, 2025**

**City Council**

Emily Lazzaro, Chair  
Justin Tseng, Vice Chair  
Anna Callahan  
Kit Collins  
Matt Leming

This meeting will take place at 6:30 P.M. in the City Council Chamber, 2nd Floor, Medford City Hall, 85 George P. Hassett Drive, Medford, MA and via Zoom.

Zoom Link:

<https://us06web.zoom.us/j/84725776038?pwd=cfJaLbADw8o25ha6AeuchcypMVi5aX.1>

Call-in Number: +13017158592,,84725776038#,,, \*290207# | Zoom Passcode: 290207

Live: Channel 22 (Comcast), Channel 43 (Verizon), [YouTube](#), and [medfordtv.org](http://medfordtv.org).

To submit written comments, please email [REliseo@medford-ma.gov](mailto:REliseo@medford-ma.gov).

**CALL TO ORDER & ROLL CALL**

**ACTION AND DISCUSSION ITEMS**

**24-036 - Offered by Kit Collins, Council Vice President**

Resolution to Discuss an Overgrowth Ordinance

**24-461 - Offered by Kit Collins, Council Vice President**

Resolution to Meet and Discuss Updates to the Rodent Control Ordinance

**PAPERS IN COMMITTEE**

To view Papers in Committee, please email [ahurtubise@medford-ma.gov](mailto:ahurtubise@medford-ma.gov).

## **Adjournment**

## Overgrowth Ordinance DRAFT 9.30.2025

Committee: Public Health & Community Safety

Chair: Councilor Lazzaro

Sponsor: Vice President Collins

### Chapter 38, Article II, Sec. 38–55. – Overgrowth Ordinance.

#### (a) Purpose and Intent.

1. The intent of this ordinance is to protect the health, safety, accessibility, and welfare of the community via providing a mechanism for the City to curtail plant overgrowth and other conditions on private property that impede on the public right-of-way; create harborage conditions for rodents, vermin or disease-carrying insects; or create other potential public health nuisances or hazards.
2. While plant life on private property is benign and additive in the vast majority of cases, the City needs the ability to intervene in cases where areas are so overgrown as to be problematic. Plant overgrowth can impede the safe and unfettered use of the public way, i.e. when plants block sidewalks. Furthermore, neglected yards can create conditions where pests (i.e. mosquitoes and rodents) or allergenic plants can thrive. ||
3. This ordinance should not be interpreted in any way to interfere with the authority of the Massachusetts Division of Fisheries and Wildlife, Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection, the Massachusetts Department of Conservation and Recreation, nor any other state agency with jurisdiction over wildlife or environmental conditions.

#### (b) Definitions.

1. Public right-of-way.
2. Vegetation.
3. Overgrowth.
4. Stagnant water.

#### (c) Overgrowth and harborage conditions are prohibited.

1. No person who owns any property abutting a sidewalk or other public right-of-way shall allow any overgrowth of grass, shrubs, weeds, or other plants or vegetation to remain uncut to such a degree that they impede upon or block the sidewalk or right-of-way.
2. All property must be maintained free of vegetation that is infested with rodents, vermin, or other dangerous insects or other animals.

**Commented [KC1]:** This places the ordinance within Nuisances section under Environment. Is this the correct place for this ordinance?

**Commented [KC2]:** Is this OK or is it too redundant of (1)?

**Commented [KC3]:** Add DCR?

**Commented [KC4]:** Requesting advice on how to define these terms, and if there are other terms used in the ordinance that should be defined.

**Commented [KC5R4]:** With standing water, the intent is to target enforcement on stagnant pools (big or small) where mosquitoes can breed, not to ban birdbaths or swimming pools.

**Commented [KC6]:** Question for Solicitor: Is there a difference between the sentence structure of (1) "No person who owns any property...." vs. (2) "All property must be maintained free of..."? Does it change who is impelled by the ordinance (owner vs. tenant)? Looking for advice on if it is fine as-is or if we should change phrasing.

3. All property must be maintained free of pools of stagnant water that are conducive to the breeding of mosquitoes; free of vegetation concealing pools of stagnant water, and free of vegetation that creates a fire hazard.
4. All property must be maintained free of an overgrowth of ragweed or other known widely allergenic plants.

(d) Exceptions.

- a. Nothing in this section shall be interpreted to prohibit gardening, landscaping, etc. However, if vegetation and/or overgrowth is determined to be the cause of a public safety threat or nuisance by the Health Director, Sanitarians, Building Commissioner or Code Enforcement Officers, that vegetation and/or overgrown section will be required to be cut back and/or removed at the instruction of the enforcing officer.

(e) Enforcement and Penalties.

1. The Building Commissioner, Health Director, Sanitarians, and Code Enforcement Officers are authorized to administer and enforce this ordinance.
  2. This ordinance shall be enforced in the manner provided in Section 1-13 of these Ordinances and M.G.L. c. 40, § 21D. Any property owner or tenant who violates any provision of this ordinance shall be subject to the following penalties:
    - i. First offense: Written warning
    - ii. Second offense: \$50.00
    - iii. Third (and each subsequent) offense: \$100.00
- B. Penalty fines collected from enforcement of this ordinance shall be deposited into the Rodent Control Account as established in Article IV, Sec. 6–12X.

**Commented [KC7]:** Did I miss anyone?

**Commented [KC8]:** Add provision that these should be earmarked to Rodent Control Fund as established in Rodent Control Ordinance

(f) Effective Date

- a. This ordinance shall become effective immediately upon passage.

**Commented [KC9]:** Update section # based on edits to Rodent Control Ordinance.

Updates to Rodent Control Ordinance UPDATED DRAFT 9.30.2025

Committee: Public Health & Community Safety

Chair: Councilor Lazzaro

Sponsor: Vice President Collins

#### ARTICLE IV. - RODENT CONTROL

##### Sec. 6-112. Purpose and Intent.

It is the purpose of this section to limit the population growth and prevent the potential spread of infectious and contagious diseases by rats, mice, and other rodents (hereinafter referred to as "rodents").

##### Sec. 6-113. Definitions.

As used in this Article, the following words and phrases shall have the meanings ascribed to them in this section:

- (1) Exterminate means to eliminate rodents through methods utilized by a licensed pest control management company.
- (2) Exterminator means an individual duly licensed by the Commonwealth of Massachusetts to exterminate and in good standing.
- (3) Infestation means the recurrent presence, as determined by burrows, droppings, gnaw marks, tracks and other physical evidence, of rodents that is determined to be a threat to public health.
- (4) Private backyard composting
- (5) Curbside composting

**Commented [KC1]:** Looking for advice from Legal on if these definitions are sufficient, and if there are other terms in the Ordinance that should be defined in this section.

##### Sec. 6-114. General requirements on private property.

- (a) All premises and places shall be maintained free from rats, mice, and other rodents; and it is unlawful for a property owner to fail to take such reasonable preventive and remedial measures for such purposes as prescribed by the Board of Health.
- (b) All private property must be kept free from conditions that are conducive to rodent activity, attract or lure rodents, or are conducive to rodent harborage, i.e., overgrown and neglected vegetation or standing water. All private property must be maintained in accordance with the Wildlife Feeding Ordinance and the Overgrowth Ordinance.
- (c) Duty to implement rodent-proofing preventative measures and mitigation.
  - a. Property owners shall implement rodent-proofing and extermination measures as set forth below to prevent rats, mice, or other rodents from gaining access to or

**Commented [KC2]:** It was suggested that we add a definition of "private backyard composting" and "curbside composting." With rollout of city compost program, I think many laypeople would assume the curbside bins are private composting.

coming into contact with food and water sources, including food products, animal food, or bird food.

- b. Trash, waste and debris must be stored securely and disposed of in accordance with the City's Solid Waste Ordinance (Article I, Ch. 70) so that excessive or accessible waste does not become an attractant or harborage for rodents.
  - i. Property owners shall prevent the accumulation of materials stored in a manner capable of providing food, harborage or other attractants for rodents, including, but not limited to: garbage, litter, excrement, filth, lumber, tree limbs, firewood, motor vehicle bodies or parts, construction or demolition debris, appliances, waste wood, scrap metal, overgrown vegetation, decaying animal or vegetable matter, animal waste, and any other articles that provide shelter and protection for rodents.
  - ii. Trash barrels, compost bins, and all other waste receptacles must be kept well-maintained, undamaged and intact so as to avoid becoming a lure or attractant for rodents. It is mandatory to replace trash barrels or other waste receptacles that have been damaged or compromised within 15 days.
- c. Duty to respond to infestation or rodent burrows.
  - i. If evidence of a rodent infestation occurs, including evidence of untreated rodent burrows, a property owner shall take all necessary measures at the expense of the owner and/or occupant to eradicate the infestation and prevent future infestation. In addition, the owner of the property shall perform all eradication measures as reasonably required by Board of Health including, but not limited to, rodent-proofing and/or extermination by a duly licensed exterminator.
- d. Use of rodent poison should be avoided in favor of any and all other rodent prevention and mitigation strategies due to its harmful effects on other local animal species, including pets and endangered wildlife.

#### **Sec. 6-119. Composting—Private, curbside and maintenance.**

- (a) Private backyard composting is allowed once the following conditions are met:
  - (1) Compost bin must be constructed out of hardware cloth/welded wire, wood, plastic barrels, or other durable material;
  - (2) The entire bin must be lined with rodent proof hardware cloth/wire mesh one-fourth inches or smaller;
  - (3) The lid must be tight fitting with a locking lid;
  - (4) There must be adequate drainage provided by means such as digging the soil below the bin and laying three to four inches of coarse gravel; and

- (5) The compost pile must be located away from attractive animal nest locations like wood piles, carports, sheds or brush piles;
  - (6) The compost pile must be located away from attractive food sources like bird feeders, pet food bowls, garbage cans, fruit trees or berry bushes.
  - (7) In accordance with Sec. 6-114(c)(b)(ii), compost bins that are damaged or otherwise compromised must be replaced within 15 days.
- (b) Curbside composting is allowed once the following conditions are met:
- (1) Compost bins must have a tight-fitting and locking lid;
  - (2) The bins must be lined with compostable plastic or paper bags to help keep the bins clean and odors to a minimum;
  - (3) Compost bins must be maintained and rinsed or cleaned as needed.
  - (4) In accordance with Sec. 6-114(c)(b)(ii), curbside compost bins that are damaged or otherwise compromised must be replaced within 15 days.

**Commented [KC3]:** Suggestion was made that first replacement fee be waived and \$60 replacement fee kicks in after that; and that replacement fees always be waived for seniors. Have to run this by DPW.

**Sec. 6-120. Enforcement, penalties and violations.**

- (a) Complaints about rodent activity will be directed to the Health Department and referred to the appropriate department as necessary.
- (b) The Building Commissioner, Code Enforcement Officers, Director of Public Works, Director of Health, and Public Health Sanitarians are authorized to administer and enforce this ordinance.
- (c) This ordinance shall be enforced in the manner provided in Section 1-13 of these Ordinances and M.G.L. c. 40, § 21D.
- (d) Any property owner of a residential building with three or fewer units who violates any provision of this ordinance shall be subject to the following penalties:
  - i. First offense: Written warning
  - ii. Second offense: \$100.00
  - iii. Third (and each subsequent) offense: \$200.00 (per day until corrected)
- (e) Any property owner of a commercial building or residential building with more than three units who violates any provision of this ordinance shall be subject to the following penalties:
  - i. First offense: Written warning
  - ii. Second offense: \$200.00
  - iii. Third (and each subsequent) offense: \$300.00 (per day until corrected)
- (f) All fees and fines collected pursuant to this Ordinance or for violations thereof shall go into the designated Rodent Control Account.

**Sec. 6-121. Permits for buildings, earthworks, street openings and utility installation.**

**(a) *Buildings and earthworks.***

- (1) All permits issued by the building commissioner for earth displacement and land clearing activities on residential and commercial property will be subject to a separate fee designated for rodent control. Such fees are to be set by the Medford City Council and reviewed at the request of the Board of Health.
- (2) In addition to the fee required above, building permits issued for certain activities will require the implementation of an Integrated Pest Management (IPM) plan as a condition of the permit. IPM plans must be submitted to the Health Department and implemented a minimum of 14 days prior to the start of the project. IPM plans will be required for:
  - a. Demolition.
  - b. Renovation or construction work on abandoned properties.
  - c. Large-scale commercial projects valued at over \$1,000,000.
  - d. Construction of residential subdivisions.
- (3) Responsibility for pest prevention and management remains with the permit holder, even when a commercial service is part of the permit holder's IPM program.

**(b) *Permits for street openings and utility installation.***

- (1) All permits issued by the department of public works for the following activities will be subject to a separate fee designated for rodent control. Such fees are to be set by the Medford City Council and reviewed every three (3) years.
  - a. The disturbance of an existing underground utility within the paved right-of-way of a distance greater than 500 linear feet;
  - b. The installation of a new underground utility within the paved right-of-way greater than 500 linear feet;
  - c. The disturbance of an existing underground utility outside of the paved right-of-way greater than 250 feet;
  - d. The installation of a new underground utility outside of the paved right-of-way greater than 250 feet.
  - e. Street opening fees do not apply to emergency repair or maintenance work that is required for public safety.
- (2) In addition to the fee required above, permits issued by the department of public works for the following activities will require the implementation of an Integrated Pest Management (IPM) plan as a condition of the permit. IPM plans must be submitted to the health department and implemented a minimum of 14 days prior to the start of the project. The 14-day advance period may be waived by the director of the department of public works in emergency situations. IPM plans will be required for:
  - a. The disturbance of an existing underground utility within the paved right-of- way of a distance greater than 1,500 linear feet;



- b. The installation of a new underground utility within the paved right-of-way greater than 1,500 linear feet;
  - c. The disturbance of an existing underground utility outside of the paved right-of-way greater than 750 feet;
  - d. The installation of a new underground utility outside of the paved right-of-way greater than 750 feet;
- (3) Disturbance shall be defined as excavating the earth immediately around an existing utility. The length of disturbance shall be measured by the overall linear length of excavation required to unearth the utility. Activities that do not require the excavation of soil shall not be considered disturbance for the purposes of this article.
- (4) Responsibility for pest prevention and management remains with the permit holder, even when a commercial service is part of the permit holder's IPM program.
- (5) Integrated Pest Management (IPM) permit fees shall be deposited into the Rodent Control Account.

**Sec. 6-122. Permits for dumpsters.**

- (a) All permits issued by the Health department for dumpsters on residential and commercial property will be subject to a separate fee designated for rodent control. Such fees are to be set by the Medford City Council and reviewed every three (3) years. Dumpsters associated with building projects for which the building permit rodent control fee has been assessed are exempt from this additional fee.
- (b) In addition to the fee required above, dumpster permits will require the implementation of an integrated pest management plan as a condition of the permit. IPM plans must be submitted to the health department and updated annually before a permit will be issued by the health department.
- (c) Responsibility for pest prevention and management remains with the permit holder, even when a commercial service is part of the permit holder's IPM program.

**Sec. 6-123. Permits for food establishments.**

- (a) All permits issued by the Health Department to operate a food establishment will be subject to a separate fee designated for rodent control. Such fees are to be set by the Medford City Council and reviewed every three (3) years.
- (b) All applicants to the health department for a permit to sell retail food or operate a food service establishment are required to develop and provide an integrated pest management plan as a condition of the permit. IPM plans must be submitted to the health department and updated annually.
- (c) Responsibility for pest prevention and management remains with the permit holder, even when a commercial service is part of the permit holder's IPM program.
- (d) Temporary food service applicants are exempt from these requirements.
- (e) Establishments not required to hold a local food establishment permit, but which serve, store, process, or distribute food on-site, including but not limited to food manufacturing

facilities, food distribution facilities, breweries, and retail establishments exempted under the Federal Food Code, are also subject to the requirements for a rodent control fee and IPM plan.

**Sec. 6-124. Permits for landfills, transfer stations, recycling facilities, and offal vehicles.**

- (a) All permits issued by the health department to operate a landfill or transfer station will be subject to a separate fee designated for rodent control. Such fees are to be set by the Medford City Council and reviewed every three (3) years.
- (b) All applicants to the health department for a permit to operate a landfill or transfer station are required to develop and provide an integrated pest management plan as a condition of the permit. IPM plans must be submitted to the health department along with the permit application and updated annually.
- (c) All applicants to the health department for a permit to remove, transport, or dispose of garbage, offal, or other offensive substances are required to provide a copy of an integrated pest management plan for the facility where the vehicles are garaged. Such IPM plan must include procedures for surveillance and control activities specific to the vehicles. IPM plans must be submitted to the health department and updated annually.
- (d) Facilities not required to hold a local health department permit, but which receive, store, sort, process, or transfer recyclable materials on-site are also subject to the requirements for a rodent control fee and IPM plan.
- (e) Responsibility for pest prevention and management remains with the permit holder, even when a commercial service is part of the permit holder's IPM program.

**Sec. 6-125. Permits for keeping of animals.**

All applicants to the health department for a new or renewal permit to keep certain animals (as defined within city ordinance or board of health regulation) are required to provide evidence that the lot and any structures thereon have been assessed by a licensed pest control operator and have been treated for, or are free from, rodents in accordance with State Sanitary Code, 105 CMR, Section 410.550.

**Sec. 6-126. Requirements for public property.**

- (a) Dumpsters on public properties are subject to the requirement for an IPM plan.
- (b) IPM plans shall be developed for all public buildings and parks and updated annually.

**Sec. 6-127. Content of integrated pest management plans.**

Integrated pest management plans required under this article must include, at minimum:

- (1) Names and certifications of licensed pest control operators. An Initial survey by a licensed pest control operator documenting presence or absence of rodent activity, burrows, and sanitation conditions that could support rodent activity on the site and accessible public areas adjacent to the site.

- (2) Details about rodent control measures to be implemented on the site, including locations of traps and bait stations, types and amounts of pesticides used, schedule for follow-up monitoring, cleanup of bait stations and rodent carcasses, staff training and notification procedures, and management of sources of food, water, and harborage on the site, including vegetation management.
- (3) Procedures for responding to rodent complaints associated with the site, including name and contact information for management-level individuals to respond to complaints.

**Sec. 6-128. Establishment of Rodent Control Account.**

- (a) This Section establishes a designated Rodent Control Account to be used for rodent control measures.
- (b) All fees and fines collected pursuant to this Ordinance or for violations thereof shall go into the designated Rodent Control Account.

**Sec. 6-129. Enforcement, penalties and fines.**

- (a) Complaints about rodent activity will be handled by the health department.
- (c) The Building Commissioner, Director of Public Works, Director of Health, and their designees are the enforcing officers for the permits issued by their offices.
- (d) The Building Commissioner, Code Enforcement Officers, Director of Public Works, Director of Health, and health Sanitarians may enforce this ordinance.
- (e) Failure to comply with Sections 6-11X through 6-11X may result in revocation of the permit and/or fines of up to \$300.00 per day, in accordance with Medford Board of Health Regulation "Noncriminal Disposition of Ordinance, By-law, Rule, or Regulation Violations."
- (f) All fees and fines collected pursuant to this Ordinance or for violations thereof shall go into the designated Rodent Control Account.

**Sec. 6-121. Fee schedule.**

All fees and fines collected pursuant to this Ordinance or for violations thereof shall go into the designated Rodent Control Account.

**Updates to Appendix A – Fee Schedule.**

**Commented [KC4]:** This is the original, blanket violation fine. Is this still relevant or has it been replaced by the new fines for residential & commercial buildings? Is this the default penalty for any violation not already specified? Do we need to articulate specific penalties for any other specific scenarios, i.e. failure to submit an IPM?

**Commented [KC5]:** Does this language need to be repeated in every Section that mentions a fee or fine; or just once at the end? The intent is for ALL fines and fees from this ordinance to go into the Rodent Control Account.

Article IV. Rodent Control		
(a) Health department annual rodent control fees:		<a href="#">6-121</a>

(1) Food establishment, food processing or storage facility .....	25.00	
(2) Landfill, transfer recycling facility .....	250.00	
(3) Offal business .....	100.00	
(4) Dumpster .....	100.00	
(b) Public works department rodent control fees: \$250.00 plus \$1.00 per foot		<a href="#">6-121</a>
(c) Building permit rodent control fees:		<a href="#">6-121</a>
(1) Commercial projects, per permit .....	300.00	
(2) Residential projects, per permit .....	250.00	