



Practical Patrol Tips

Central Division
South Central Region

The Mouse House Game

OK, raise your hand if you've ever started to open the toboggan at an incident scene, only to have one or two (or eleven) mice jump out? Do you find this helps to calm the patient? Some of us explain that these are "comfort animals" that the patrol provides at no additional cost. That hasn't actually helped much.

You can't blame them for wanting to find a snug home to spend the winter in. Who doesn't? But still ...



Home Sweet Home

So what do the little "helpers" provide? They definitely add a measure of excitement to the situation. They also modify the blankets and tarps to include additional unneeded ventilation holes. And then there are the items of evidence they leave behind such as acorn shells and many "small dark grains of rice".



One standard piece of advice to patrollers is to open the toboggan tarp and blankets out of direct sight of the patient. That can help, unless a bystander elects to assist by pointing out that "THERE WAS A MOUSE IN THERE! AND THERE'S ANOTHER ONE!".

You could simply repack toboggans at the start of each shift. But we have another approach you might consider.

It comes from a sailboat manufacturer in Princeton Wisconsin as a way to stop mice and chipmunks from chewing holes in sails while the boat is stored.

The recommendation is to place one or two dryer sheets in the bottom of the toboggan before you load it with everything else. As it turns out, dryer sheets have many uses beyond making your cloths smell nice. We aren't rodent experts, so don't know exactly why it works, but it seems pretty effective at repelling our little buddies.



The Devil's Head Friday day crew used this method this past ski season. They packed many toboggans at the beginning of the season, used them throughout, and unpacked them at the end of the season. They didn't encounter any mice, alive or dead. Granted, this is anecdotal evidence, but it did seem to work well. Plus the dryer sheets smell better than moth balls.

Just thought this might help. For an interesting list of alternate uses of dryer sheets, try a web search for "dryer sheet uses".