



Why rodents damage vehicles

Soy-based Wiring Insulation is Part of the Problem

Rodents like to chew on things; we know that. You may have been involved in a situation where a mouse, rat, or even a squirrel has chewed on wires in a vehicle. We used to blame that on a rodent's attraction for road salt. But apparently there is a new attraction under the bonnet.

Several years ago, auto makers started using biodegradable, soy-based wiring insulation because the soy wiring degrades in landfills unlike the older, petroleum-based, plastic-covered wiring. But they didn't really think it through. Soy is food-based; rodents are attracted to it, and are even more likely to chew on newer wiring. Even worse, auto makers are starting to make other car parts, like seat padding, with soy materials in an attempt to be more "green". It can cost thousands of rands to have chewed wiring replaced and manufacturers say that this kind of damage is not covered under the vehicle's warranty.

What can people do to keep rodents from gnawing on their car's wiring? Some people are using various types of rodent repellents under the hood or sprayed on the wiring. Mothballs or other smell repellents under the bonnet are not a good idea. When the heat or A/C is turned on, the vehicle will fill with mothball vapours or other smells. Some repellents could be flammable on a hot engine. There is an anti-rodent tape sold by some car dealers for

nesting in a vehicle that is unused or parked outside. Check under the vehicle's bonnet regularly. It may be hard to spot gnawed wires



but you might spot a mouse's nest. Debris and urine from nests can also result in necessary repairs.

- Clean out the vehicle. Clutter provides nest sites and food wrappers provide food.
- Customers should make sure there are no rodent food sources near the vehicle. If the vehicle is stored in a garage, move or secure pet food, bird seed, kitty litter boxes, and garbage cans. Make sure the garage door has a secure seal to keep rodents out.
- Place rodent bait inside bait stations in the garage to intercept rodents and to offer a more desirable food alternative than the car's wiring. Don't place loose rodent bait in a vehicle because it could attract non-target animals, including pets.
- If you have to clean rodent nests out of heavily-infested vehicle, take precautions against stirring up air-borne diseases like hantavirus.

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wrapping wires. Of course, the best protection is to prevent rodents in the first place.

- There is more likely to be gnawing damage to vehicle wires when rodents are

Ventilate the area, spray the nest and droppings with disinfectant and let it sit briefly. Wear gloves and a respirator and dispose of the mess in a sealed plastic bag.

Struggling to complete your pest control correspondence NQF level 4 course? Even if you have only completed 1 or 2 modules, why not contact us?

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NO: AGRI/c prov/0207/08
FET REGISTRATION NO: 2012/
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