



Rodents chew on car wiring, automakers face lawsuits

Consumer Reports suggests ways to protect your vehicle

By Marilyn Moritz - Reporter

Posted: 6:28 PM, October 16, 2017

SAN ANTONIO - Small, furry rodents are causing big, pricey headaches for some car owners. As the weather cools, critters like mice and rats often find shelter under the hood of a car. They may also make a meal of the wiring covers.

When Lisa Barrett's truck would not start, she had it towed to the mechanic.

"The mechanic noticed some definite mouse damage, that there were some wires chewed," she said.

It cost \$400 to repair the wires.

She is not alone.

"We've noticed lots of complaints about rodents chomping their way through car wires, causing huge headaches for car owners," said Consumer Reports' Autos Editor Jon Linkov.

Class action lawsuits filed last year against Toyota and Honda claim vehicles are defective because soy-based materials are being used to cover wires, making them attractive to rodents. The lawsuits also claim the car companies should be responsible for the cost of repairs.

To help combat the issue, Honda sells rodent-deterrent tape treated with spicy capsaicin, the active component in chili peppers. That's a fact the lawsuit claims is an acknowledgement of the defective nature of soy-based material.

To prevent rodents from eating your car wires, Linkov suggests checking often under the hood if your car sits in the street or in the garage for long periods of time. If you spot damage, he says to use rodent tape over the damaged wires to protect from more damage. And, if there is an area

where rodents can gain access, such as a ventilation area, ask the mechanic to install wire mesh over it.

In statements to Consumer Reports, both manufacturers said there is no evidence indicating that substances used for wiring cause rodents to chew through them. A Honda spokesman went further saying it's a long established fact that rodents are drawn to chew on wires, whether in cars or in homes.