



Squirrels gone wild: Rodent chews up car wires, costing owner \$9K in repairs

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Some Montrealers are worried that too many squirrels are scurrying around the city, causing thousands of dollars' worth of property damage.

Francine Paradis got a nasty surprise when her brand new car, an Infiniti, had a problem.

"The 'Check Engine' light came on, and the next day other lights came on telling me I had no ABS, no traction," Paradis told Radio-Canada.

She slowly drove to a garage and the mechanic popped open the hood.

"He said, 'Oh my God, come and see this!' and the damage was just incredible."

The car's wires and insulation wool were all chewed up. The vehicle had to be completely rewired. The repairs cost \$9,000.



Paradis was also warned by her insurance company to keep an eye out for squirrels.

"They said, 'Be careful because we already had this happen with another client.' This is not normal squirrel behaviour. This is absurd," said Paradis, adding that the city should take action.

Patrick Durocher, a wildlife control specialist of 25 years, said he's getting a growing number of complaints about grey squirrels in the Montreal area every day.

"I get about 10 calls per week just about squirrels...That's much higher than in the past."

The calls he receives are from homeowners who say squirrels have literally chewed through their houses, resulting in structural damage.

"I have one client in Laval where the squirrels caused \$15,000 in damages by chewing all the wiring."

Durocher said wires that have been stripped can cause short-circuits and house fires.