

# Increase in breakdowns caused by rodent damage

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Repair garages in Angus are reportedly having to deal with a spike in the number of rodent-related breakdowns.

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The UK Government entered the Road Transport Fuel Obligation in 2008, which requires a 5% portion of diesel to be derived from waste sources such as sugar, ethanol and cooking oils.

While the fuel may bring with it some green credentials to fuel retailers, repair garages and breakdown recovery firms are reporting an increase in chewed fuel lines.

Andy Henderson, owner of Central Motors in Letham, is hopeful the problem will disappear as we move past a warm start to winter.

He said: "I had spoken to someone from the AA who said he had seen several cases of it.

"One couple had a cable chewed through twice in as many weeks, and another woman from just down the road came in with the same problem around the same time.

"The damage seems to be at the leak-off pipe, which has probably a lot of the fuel on it over a period of time." Patrol reports Vanessa Gyll, a technical specialist for the AA, said: "We have problems with rodents eating all sorts of car components brake lines (they like the sweet-tasting brake fluid), the plastic coating on wiring, plastic fuel lines, etc.

"However, the maximum content of biodiesel in ordinary diesel is only 7%, and don't think that would make diesel taste very appetising even to mice.

"If the owner was using a high blend of biodiesel say made from waste cooking oil then this would be much more attractive."

'She added: 'Unfortunately, we don't have a breakdown category for chewed pipes, so I regret I can't help with any breakdown statistics.

"Several patrols have reported evidence of rodent activity when they are working on members' cars, though."

Under UK law, petrol retailers must adopt a 5% biodiesel mix in their fuels by 2013 however, the regulator, the Renewable Fuels Agency, says suppliers are falling well short of voluntary environmental standards, as around 80% of the feedstock for the biofuel was imported.