

# HOME SAFETY MATTERS

SPRING 2025

## RATS! WHAT TO DO WHEN YOU'VE GOT A RODENT PROBLEM

### Mice and rats can spread disease, cause property damage

You may never see a rat or mouse but you can tell when they have decided your home seems like a nice place to take up residence.

According to the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, signs of rodent infestation include:

- Rodent droppings around food packages, in drawers or cupboards, and under the sink.
- Nesting material such as shredded paper, fabric or dried plant matter.
- Signs of chewing on food packaging.
- Holes chewed through walls and floors that create entry points into the home.
- Stale smells coming from hidden areas.

Discourage rats and mice from taking up residence on your property by removing food and water sources, and items that can provide them shelter:

- Seal holes inside and outside the home to keep rodents out. This may be as simple as plugging small holes with



steel wool, or patching holes in inside or outside walls.

- Remove potential rodent nesting sites from your property, including leaf piles and deep mulch.
- Clean up food and water sources in and near your house. Garbage should be kept in containers with tight-fitting lids. Turn compost piles to cover newly added food scraps. Stop feeding outdoor birds while you are controlling an infestation or feed only huskless items that leave less residue that can be food for rodents.

Rat and mouse poison products, if misused, can potentially harm you, your children, or your pets. Always read the product label and follow all directions when using pesticides.

- Always store pesticides away from the

reach of children and pets, such as in a locked utility cabinet or garden shed.

- Place traps or baits only in locations where children and pets cannot access them.
- Never store pesticides next to food, including pet food.
- Read and follow the instructions on the pesticide label.
- To prevent accidental poisoning of wildlife and pets that might eat a dead animal, promptly remove and dispose of carcasses of dead rodents.

If you are uncomfortable dealing with an infestation, you may wish to hire a rodent control professional. Choose a pest control company carefully. Ask to see their license. If you have concerns, call your state pesticide regulatory agency.

## BREATHE EASY: CHANGE THE CABIN FILTER

### Protect your vehicle's occupants from harmful pollutants

If you have conditions that impact your respiratory health, the cleanliness of the air you breathe is especially important.

In your vehicle, make sure the air is clean by following the manufacturer's recommendations and regularly replace the cabin air filter, according to Car and Driver magazine. The filter helps remove

harmful pollutants, including pollen and dust. Outside air goes through this filter, trapping any contaminants to prevent them from infiltrating the air you breathe.

Signs the filter needs replacing include:

- Reduced or weak airflow.
- A whistling sound coming from the cabin air intake ducts.
- Musty, unpleasant odors in the air.
- Excessive noise from the intake ducts.



The cabin air filter is usually located behind the glove box. See your owner's manual for specific replacement instructions.



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## A DANGEROUS SITUATION

### What should you do when a power line contacts your car?

Strong spring storms can take out a power line in an instant. So can a collision with a utility pole.

When a downed power line comes into contact with a vehicle, it is a dangerous situation for drivers, passengers, bystanders, Good Samaritans and first responders.

First Energy, which owns 10 electric companies in Ohio, Pennsylvania, West Virginia, Maryland and New Jersey, has these safety tips if you have a power line or other electrical equipment come into contact with your vehicle:

- Move the car away from the power line or equipment if you can do so safely.
- If the car cannot be moved, stay inside until electric utility workers notify you it is safe to exit.
- Call 911 immediately to report the emergency.



*A downed power line is a dangerous emergency situation. Always assume the line is energized and tell others to stay at least 30 feet away.*

- Warn others to stay at least 30 feet away.
- If you must exit the car due to a fire or other imminent danger, do NOT touch the car and the ground at the same time. Jump clear, land with your feet together and, keeping your feet on the ground at all times, shuffle your feet until you are at least 30 feet away from the vehicle. Do not return to the car.

## TAKE C.H.A.R.G.E OF LITHIUM-ION BATTERY SAFETY

### Storage, charging and recycling key to preventing fires, explosions

Proper storage, charging and recycling are crucial when using lithium-ion battery-powered devices.

The Fire Safety Research Institute's Take C.H.A.R.G.E of Battery Safety program aims to educate the public about safe lithium-ion battery practices. These batteries store energy more densely than traditional batteries and can become unstable if damaged (punctured, swollen), improperly used (overcharged) or exposed to extreme temperatures. This instability can lead to overheating, sparking and even explosions.

- 1. Choose Certified Products:** Prioritize your safety by selecting lithium-ion battery-powered devices certified by a nationally recognized testing laboratory to ensure they meet important safety requirements.
- 2. Handle Lithium-Ion Battery-Powered Devices with Care:** Always

follow manufacturer guidelines and use the provided charger for lithium-ion battery-powered devices. Avoid modifying batteries or chargers and charge your devices in safe environments away from extreme temperatures, direct sunlight and flammable materials. For larger devices, such as e-bikes, charge in a location that does not block your exit path, separate from sleeping areas and ideally outside your home. Refrain from overnight charging of large devices.

**3. Always Stay Alert for Warning Signs:** Regularly inspect devices for any signs of damage, such as swelling or punctures. Be aware of unusual sounds like hissing or popping. Watch out for excessive heat or a strange odor. White or gray wispy smoke indicates there is immediate danger of fire. If you notice any of these warning signs, immediately stop using the lithium-ion battery-powered device.

**4. Recycle Devices and Batteries Properly:** Responsibly dispose of old or damaged batteries and devices by taking them to

## CDC TRAVEL TIPS

### Prevent dangerous blood clots from forming while traveling

Traveling often includes sitting for periods of time, which can increase your chances of developing deep vein thrombosis (DVT), a type of blood clot. Part of the clot can break off and travel to the lungs and cause a pulmonary embolism, which can be fatal. The CDC offers these tips:

- Stand up or walk occasionally. Select an aisle seat when possible so you can walk around every two to three hours.
- If traveling by car, include breaks in your travel schedule to stretch and walk around.
- Exercise your calf muscles and stretch your legs while you're sitting.
- Talk to your doctor about wearing compression stockings or taking medicine before departure if you have additional risk factors for blood clots.
- Taking aspirin to prevent blood clots when traveling is not recommended. If you take aspirin for other reasons, check with your doctor.



*Lithium-ion batteries store energy more densely than traditional batteries. They can become unstable if damaged, improperly used or exposed to extreme temperatures.*

a designated battery recycling center. Never discard batteries, chargers or battery-powered devices in regular trash bins.

**5. Get Out Quickly if There's a Fire:** Know the warning signs to look and listen for and get out if you see or hear them. Follow your home fire escape plan to leave immediately, closing doors behind you as you exit, and call 9-1-1.

**6. Educate Others on Safe Practices:** Help protect your friends and loved ones by sharing how they can Take C.H.A.R.G.E. of Battery Safety.