If you love your electric vehicle, consider becoming an Electric Vehicle Ambassador

There is a deep interest in electric vehicles throughout the province and the best education comes from electric vehicle drivers themselves. If you want to tell people all about living electric, perhaps join a local electric vehicle club, and register as a volunteer with our crew of Emotive EV Ambassadors.

www.emotivebc.ca

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GET UP TO SPEED ABOUT DRIVING AN ELECTRIC VEHICLE

We are really excited to share our love of electric vehicles with you To make the learning curve a little less curvy, here are some tips and tricks for driving your electric vehicle. Once you get the hang of it, it's a breeze!

emotive

Electric vehicles don't make noise when you turn them on.

Most electric cars are started by stepping on the brake, making sure the car is in Park, and pressing the ON button. When you press the ON button, your car will start and it will not sound like your usual fuel-powered vehicle. In fact, it'll sound like nothing. At first, you might not think the car is on, but rest assured it is.

Your dash lights and display will confirm that you in fact have started the car. Welcome to the sweet silence of driving electric.

There's a new kind of braking in town: Regenerative braking.

When you ease up on the accelerator, the electric motor provides resistance which slows the car and generates power at the same time. This is your car making electricity! It does this when you brake and when you coast down hills. It's a new feeling for people who typically drive gas-powered cars.

If it's a little too much to get used to too soon, most electric cars have what's called a Regen Setting. You can adjust yours to a more comfortable setting if you'd like.

EVs still have 12v batteries.

Just like a gas car, your EV has a smaller 12v battery for running the accessories, infotainment, lights and even turning the car on. The much larger battery pack for powering the motor is called a "traction battery." Draining the 12v battery will prevent the vehicle from turning on – same as a gas vehicle.

Different EVs have various methods of recharging the 12v battery from the larger traction battery, but here are two universal tips: 1) Make sure the car is fully turned on if you are running accessories, heat, AC, screens etc. 2) Keep a portable battery booster in your emergency kit, just like you would for a gas car.

Unlock to unplug

It is common for EVs to automatically lock the charging cable to the vehicle. This prevents someone from unplugging you!

If the charging cable is locked to your vehicle, you probably need to unlock the car, even if you haven't actively locked it. There will also be an emergency release pull somewhere inside the car or under the hood, close to where the charging port is.

You also need to make sure the charging station is stopped, especially when using a fast charger.

Find charging stations with helpful apps

Download PlugShare to find all public charging stations near you. You can filter for specific types, find out all the details about using them, and view feedback from other drivers.

A Better Route Planner is an app that calculates the best places for you to charge based on your vehicle and your destination. It'll also estimate how long it will take you to get where you're going and how much it will cost. You can really nerd out by changing options for weather, road conditions, and more.

Get familiar with charging station etiquette

Newbies take note: there are some rules about charging station etiquette that we highly recommend you follow.

1. If you're at a Fast Charger, limit your charging time to 30 - 40 minutes. Charging speed slows the closer you are to full anyway and it's nice to minimize waiting times for others waiting to charge.
2. Regardless of charging station type, move your vehicle after you've taken what you need. Don't be that person who stays long after the charge is complete. Not cool.
3. You do not have to stay at your car while its charging. However, do use a charging station app to monitor your charging status so you can move your car when it is filled up.

Know your plugs.

Don't worry. It's not complicated. You either have a plug-in hybrid, non-Tesla fully-electric, or a Tesla.

J1772 only. No fast charging.

Most plug-in hybrds and some older fully-electrics only have J1772. You can use your basic charging cable, or use a level 2 charging station; however, you cannot fast charge or even connect to a fast charger for trickle charging.

You cannot use Tesla chargers with this connection.

Level 2 chargers are often found at malls, community centres, parkades and homes.

CCS or CHAdeMO. Fast.

Fully electric vehicles (aside from Tesla) have either CCS or CHAdeMO ports. You can connect to public charging stations, including fast chargers.

CCS includes the J1772 connection, and CHAdeMO vehicles have a separate J1772 port, so you can use everything except for Tesla chargers. Remember, only Tesla vehicles can use Tesla Superchargers and Destination chargers.

Tesla. Superchargers and Destination Chargers.

Tesla vehicles use one plug for all their charging. They can use high speed Tesla Superchargers, slower Wall Connectors for Destination charging, plus Mobile Connectors with a variety of common wall plug adapters. All of those examples are Tesla only.*

Tesla vehicles also come with J1772 adapters so they can use public level 2 stations.

Tesla drivers can also purchase CCS adapters to use at public fast charging stations.

Start your charge.

Some charging stations can be activated with a credit card. Many require a network account, and some are even free.

Network memberships.

Activate charging stations using a membership linked to a smart phone app or an RFID card. Charging fees are applied to a credit card associated with your account.

Common networks in B.C. are BC Hydro EV, Chargepoint and Flo; they all have "roaming" agreements so you can use one account at any of those stations.

It's best to have both the membership app on your phone and a phyiscal RFID card. You can order a card after making an account.

You will also notice fast-chargers at fuel stations and convenience stores in B.C. Use apps like PlugShare to find details.

Credit card.

Electrify Canada and Petro-Canada stations accept credit cards without a network membership, but also offer membership for different rates and extra functionality.

Free.

You will find free stations with no app/card activation at BC Ministry of Transportation and Infrastructure rest areas.

Tesla Superchargers

Tesla vehicles do not require additional apps or cards to use Superchargers. The Supercharger will automatically recognize the car and start charging when plugged in.

Remember, only Tesla vehicles can use Tesla Superchargers.*

Tesla drivers can use adapters to charge at non-Tesla stations, but will need the appropriate network memberships.

*Several other brands have announced plans to use the same plug as Tesla starting in 2024, but there are no adapters or other brands *currently* using the same plug as Tesla.