



BUYER'S AND SELLER'S ADVICE

WHAT IF YOU WANT TO DRIVE AN ELECTRIC VEHICLE BUT DON'T HAVE A GARAGE?

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IT'S STILL POSSIBLE, THOUGH THERE ARE CHALLENGES.

Most electric vehicles are charged at home within the secure confines of a garage. But what can you do if you park in a carport or on a driveway, instead? What if you live in a condominium or an apartment building and at best have an assigned parking space?

While either of these situations can be challenging to EV ownership, as you'll find out they don't necessarily have to be a deterrent.

WHAT, NO GARAGE?

Not having a garage on your property doesn't mean you can't home-charge an EV, as long as you have electric service and a dedicated area in which to park. Unfortunately, charging an electric car outdoors requires more than just an external electric outlet. You'll want to have an electrician install a hardwired charging station, which is also called electric vehicle service equipment (EVSE). You'll need to have it attached to either an external wall or a freestanding pole. Outdoor-rated units are safe to use in all weather conditions, but their installation is likely pursuant to your area's building codes, which means you or your electrician will have to secure a permit before work proceeds.

An outdoor-rated EVSE can cost between \$500 and around \$1,200 depending on features and how it's configured. Make sure any charger you choose comes with enough cord to reach your car's charging port easily. Expect to pay several hundred dollars to have a hardwired EVSE installed, based on how and where it will be placed, local labor rates, and permit costs. On the plus side, you may be able to take advantage of state and/or local power company-provided incentives for having a charger installed. [MYEV.com](#) is offering a choice of outdoor-rated hardwired charging units from supplier ClipperCreek that start at \$379. You can find them via a link embedded in any of our [used EV listings](#) under the "Home Charging Options" section.

While you're at it, have the electrician install 240-volt service for the charger so you can take advantage of what's called Level 2 charging. Depending on the model, it can take between eight and perhaps as long as 24 hours to replenish a fully drained EV battery via standard 110-volt house current (that's Level 1 charging). Level 2 charging can fully replenish an EV's power cells in as little as four hours.

WHAT ABOUT APARTMENT AND CONDO DWELLERS?

City dwellers stand to benefit the most from driving an EV – they tend to take shorter trips at slower speeds and live where the environment is already subjected to tailpipe emissions from cars and trucks with internal combustion engines. However, those living in apartment and condominium buildings rarely have access to onsite charging stations.

One solution here would be to petition your landlord or condo board to have an EVSE installed in the building's parking lot or garage, either at your assigned space or in a common area for residents' use. For its part, the ChargePoint company says it will work with your building's property manager or condo board to have this accomplished. Since this can be a long shot at best, you can have one installed yourself, but you'll wind up leaving it and however much money you've invested for the unit and installation behind if you move. And unless you have an assigned parking space, there's a chance someone else's car might be parked in front of the charger at any given time.

You may be able to take advantage of charging an EV at your workplace. Some companies have installed electric car chargers in their garages and parking lots for their employees' use. Workplace charging is still not particularly common, however, though some states now offer an incentive for having onsite stations installed.

CHARGING IN PUBLIC

Beyond the above options, you would have to rely exclusively on public charging stations. You'll most often find them installed in parking garages, retail parking lots, at hotels, new-car dealerships, and even curbside in areas having a higher concentration of EV ownership. Tesla has established an extensive "Supercharger" network of stations at its dealerships and other locations that's exclusively for its own EV owners.

If public charging is your only viable option, it's wise to determine where public chargers are installed near where you live, work, and shop before buying one. Websites like [PlugShare.com](https://www.plugshare.com) and [PlugInAmerica.org](https://www.pluginaustralia.org) feature interactive maps that show the locations of public charging stations.

While most public units deliver Level 2 service, some provide what's called Level 3 charging. Also known as DC Fast Charging, it can bring a given EV's battery up to 80 percent of its capacity in around 30 minutes. But while many Level 2 chargers remain free to use, you'll have to pay for DC Fast Charging. Some states allow pricing based on the kilowatt-hours (kWh) of electricity used, while others only allow providers to charge on a per-minute basis. We recently paid \$0.29 a minute for Level 3 Charging via a unit located just outside Chicago, IL.

You'll also want to join a charging network like Blink, ChargePoint, or EVgo. You can usually sign up online and will be issued a card to initiate charging. Depending on the network, charging can either be pre-paid or linked to a credit-card account. You can usually use a mobile phone app to locate the nearest public charging stations, determine what type of charging they support, and even whether or not they're currently in use or are out of order.

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