

Tips to help you
get ready

Plug-In Electric Vehicles: Coming to a Garage Near You

BY JOEL POINTON

With more than 8,000 plug-in electric vehicles (PEVs), the San Diego region has one of the highest adoption rates of these vehicles in the nation. There are close to 20 different models of plug-in vehicles on the road, and car sales data shows more of these vehicles will be on our streets and in our garages in the coming years.



Multi-unit residential communities are finding that offering this type of amenity can attract residents looking for greener housing options. So, where does a community start when looking for charging installation options?

Charging Basics

Electric vehicles come in two basic flavors: 100% electric (only a battery to power them) and plug-in hybrids (initial miles use electric power, and then it switches to hybrid power of gas and electricity for additional miles). As you'd expect, 100% electric vehicles are totally dependent on charging and will usually need faster charging for their "gulps" of power, whereas the smaller batteries in plug-in hybrids can usually get by "sipping" their electricity.

Residential charging comes in two basic flavors as well: low-power charging (a regular three-prong wall outlet – AC Level 1 charging) and medium power charging (think of a power connection for a stove or dryer – AC Level 2 charging). The slower Level 1 can provide adequate charging for many vehicles; it is often all plug-in hybrids need, or those 100% electrics that don't drive far during the day. The faster Level 2 chargers can provide adequate charging for all plug-in vehicles.

Each condo/rental community will need to develop their own version of an electric vehicle charging policy. The best place for residents to start the process is to meet with the community manager – in other words, to meet with you. Residents will want to know

what, if anything, has been decided for the association relative to PEV charging. Existing state law allows for the establishment of restrictions, but not prohibition of vehicle charging in associations. Make sure you're ready to answer questions by reviewing the available resources described below.

Resources to Get You Started

The California Plug-In Electric Vehicle Collaborative (PEVC) is a public/private organization focused on accelerating the adoption of PEVs to meet California's economic, energy and environmental goals. The organization has several tools to help community association managers and their residents learn about best practices, including these resources:

- Plug-in Electric Vehicle Charging Infrastructure Guidelines for Multi-unit Dwellings
- Plug-in Electric Vehicle Charging Guide for Property Owners, Managers and Homeowner Associations of Multi-unit Dwellings
- Plug-in Electric Vehicle Charging Guide for Residents of Multi-unit Dwellings
- How Do Multi-unit Dwellings Become PEV Ready?

The PEVC has developed a survey to help properties assess their tenants' interest in PEVs. Learn more at www.pevcollaborative.org/Multi-unit-Dwelling.

After you have done some background work, check your local

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Get Your Community Plug-In Ready

- 1 Take a poll and see how many people in your community may be buying a plug-in vehicle. Visit www.pevcollaborative.org/multi-unit-dwelling for a sample questionnaire.
- 2 Learn about the different charging equipment available at www.pluginamerica.org/accessories or GoElectricDrive.com.
- 3 Look at the property layout and potential location of meters, wiring and parking spaces and read the existing rules of placing equipment in common and private areas.
- 4 Come to a consensus on the scope of your charging project with owners, managers and residents.
- 5 Choose a qualified contractor to coordinate an onsite evaluation and install the equipment.
- 6 Spread the news that you live in a community that supports electric vehicles.

Visit www.pevcollaborative.org/multi-unit-dwelling for more resources, including the "How Do Multi-Unit Dwellings Become PEV Ready?" brochure.

Plug-In Electric Vehicles

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utility's website for resources that may help your process. The utilities are also excellent sources of information relative to rates, metering options and load impact on your existing accounts.

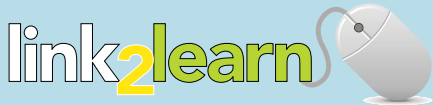
Next Steps

A licensed contractor or electrical design group can help you do a walk-through and evaluate the existing electrical resources and options for your community. When you have an idea of the size and scope of your charging needs, your contractor will handle the permitting and inspections and notify the local utility for any coordination needed for the additional load for your

community. (See sidebar on page 51 for an easy, step-by-step guide for getting plug-in ready.)

Reducing our dependence on oil and using cleaner fuel sources are both state and national priorities we will all be adjusting to over time. The process for planning and providing vehicle charging will take time, just as any other community improvement project does. There are no "cookie cutter" solutions for vehicle charging. Starting the process now can help ensure you are fully aware of the spectrum of options and each of their relative costs in order to find the best fit for your community.

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San Diego Gas & Electric (SDG&E) offers online tools including an apartment/condo brochure, a sample case study, DOE video and links to other resources like GoElectricDrive.com, which has illustrations of vehicles, their charging requirements and different types of vehicle chargers. SDG&E is also available to present a free workshop on multi-unit dwellings and vehicle charging to your membership.

Learn more at www.sdge.com/clean-energy/residential/apartments-and-condos.

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