

Good Will Charging

Contrary to reports of “charger rage” that have received media coverage, electric vehicle charging can be a model of cooperation. That was the take-away message from the California Plug-In Electric Vehicle Collaborative’s October webinar, *Taking Turns: How to Effectively Share Electric Vehicle Chargers*. The webinar lived up to its title by highlighting successful programs and solutions that allow EV charging to go smoothly. The value of policy, training, driver engagement, and good communications emerged as common themes.

Formulating the Rules

“Many companies have formal policies,” said Kristi Brodd of Advanced Energy. “These are great at setting ground rules and keeping charging moving smoothly.” Kristi was fresh from surveying California companies about how they handle charging. Her work feeds into a new guidebook, *Plugging in at Work: How to Effectively Install, Share, and Manage Electric Vehicle Charging Stations*. The guidebook will soon be available on the PEV Collaborative’s website.

Fleet, transportation, and facilities departments collaborated at San Diego Gas & Electric to create a formal policy. “We ask that EV-driving employees participate in a training program so they understand the philosophy behind the charging policy and the dos and don’ts for using the facilities,” said Greg Haddow of SDG&E. The program currently has 158 chargers spread between 18 sites, serving an EV fleet of 30, as well as 185 EV-driving employees.

Justina Hyland of Adobe presented a model of an informal policy that is managed by the company’s EV community, which currently consists of more than 100 drivers sharing 47 dedicated charging spaces. “Every quarter, all the EV drivers meet and govern themselves. The rules of etiquette were developed by the team based on our experiences with charging. EV drivers are motivated to be responsible so that others will be responsible because they all have a vested interest in sharing this resource.”

Lisa Chiladakis of the PEV Collaborative and moderator Chris White of BKi discussed PEV charging in a City of Sacramento-owned public parking garage, which does not have a formal policy. However, regular users have an agreement in place for how to manage the 20 Level 2 chargers, which serve about 100 EVs.

Engagement and Management

The panelists discussed the role of communications in helping EV drivers understand and maintain charging etiquette. Flyers, dashboard placards, courtesy cards, email distribution lists, signs, websites, intranets, and EV groups serve to keep drivers informed of the rules and program updates, as well as help them manage the logistics of charging.

“It becomes routine for drivers to respect others schedules,” Greg observed. SDG&E’s dashboard cards let drivers know at what time a vehicle can be unplugged. Emails inform users not only about rules but alert them to periods of congestion so they can adjust their plans. “We find that a frequently used email communication helps a lot. We view employee education to be the most important thing, and we welcome having employees tell us their ideas and concerns.” SDG&E also has facilities staff who monitor EV charging and issue warnings when rules aren’t followed.

Adobe uses emails and texts to alert drivers when their charging is complete. “We have an active EV community. If drivers aren’t obeying the rules, they are called out about it. They police themselves,” Justina noted.

At the Sacramento's public parking garage, rules and etiquette are communicated with a flyer. Additionally, the city's parking garage website hosts a drivers' group, which users are encouraged to join. The EV parking spaces are all marked for active charging, and this policy is enforced through parking violations.

The webinar concluded with the panelists offering advice on EV charging. Greg emphasized the importance of surveying employees and designing a program around their needs. Justina recommended ongoing monitoring and having the flexibility to grow and adapt. Kristi recommended being proactive about creating a policy in order to have rules in place should problems arise.

For more information and to hear a recording of the webinar, please visit www.pevcollaborative.org/webinars_2015 or contact Lisa Chiladakis, Manager, Technology and Programs, PEV Collaborative at lchiladakis@pevcollaborative.org