



COOL DAVIS PLANNING GUIDE: BUYING A USED ELECTRIC VEHICLE

(Updated Sept 2022) The most important issues when buying a used electric vehicle are the condition of the battery and its warranty.

Pros to buying a used EV

- ⊕ Competitive prices and cash purchases avoid finance charges
- ⊕ Many are previously leased vehicles (clean, well-maintained, low miles)
- ⊕ PG&E purchase or HOV lane sticker incentives may not have been claimed
- ⊕ New federal incentives for used vehicles anticipated 2023
- ⊕ CA incentives are available based on income
- ⊕ Used EVs with healthy batteries are almost like a new car; a car with a degraded battery could still meet your needs
- ⊕ No or very low risk of engine or transmission failure

Cons to buying a used EV

- ⊕ Shorter range compared to newer models
- ⊕ Batteries and range will be somewhat degraded (which is normal)
- ⊕ Air-cooled battery packs may have experienced more degradation
- ⊕ Clean Air Vehicle decals (High Occupancy Vehicle HOV for "carpool" lanes) may no longer be valid and may be difficult to remove

Choosing the right used EV

- ⊕ Educate yourself about charging and range ahead of time
- ⊕ Choose the right electric vehicle for you, not just the cheapest one
- ⊕ Be realistic about range: estimate your needs by doubling your daily commute miles and adding some, even if you have workplace charging, then take into account battery degradation over time
- ⊕ Compare the price to leasing or buying a new or newer vehicles including incentives
- ⊕ Check the battery failure warranty from the manufacturer or certified used vehicle program
- ⊕ Look for a battery capacity warranty from the manufacturer or certified used vehicle program

- ⊕ Before you make the trip out to see the car, ask dealers and private party sellers about the current capacity of the battery compared to the original total capacity. Remember, the true health may not be accurately disclosed. This information will likely not be posted in advertisements or necessarily reflected in the price. Often dealers may not know this information.
- ⊕ For plug in hybrids, check both the electric only miles and gas miles. These will indicate wear on each. Electric motors typically have a longer life than gas engines. As an example, a used EV with 30,000 miles might only have 10,000 miles on the gas engine.

Making the purchase

- ⊕ Call ahead and request that the car be nearly fully charged when you arrive so you can test charging
- ⊕ Perform a test charge when you get there to make sure charging works
- ⊕ Make sure portable trickle charge cables (110-volt) are included and test the connection
- ⊕ Check battery capacity (or confirm): if the owner or dealer has not already provided a report on battery capacity, ask them to do so, or arrange for a reputable dealer or independent mechanic to perform a check and issue a report. There are third-party software and apps that also perform this function
- ⊕ Ask private party owners for records of actual range. Keep in mind: the reported range on the dash may not reflect the actual range especially for freeway trips
- ⊕ If no range records are available, consider asking to borrow the car with collateral for one charge and discharge cycle. For dealers, ask about a temporary borrowing program.
- ⊕ If none of these options are available, do a long test drive and note the difference between reported range and actual. Note that it is common for freeway range to be 20% less than city driving.
- ⊕ Ask private party sellers how they used the car. Did they travel at high speeds frequently? Drain the battery low and often?
- ⊕ Check if the vehicle has a “Quick Charge” connector if needed (not standard)

Popular Used EVs

Chevy Spark EV
 Fiat 500e
 Tesla
 Volkswagen eGolf
 Nissan LEAF

Popular Used Plug-In Hybrids

Chevy Volt and Bolt
 BMWi3 REX
 Prius Prime
 Ford Fusion Energi

Do More Digging

[Plug In America](#)
[myev.com](#)
[ev-vin.blogspot.com](#)