



At home electric car charger

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If you recently purchased an electric vehicle (EV) or you're looking into buying one, you probably also want to get a home charger installed. That way, you'll be able to conveniently recharge the battery while your car is parked at home. Many EV drivers plug in overnight so that their car is always charged in the morning.

But there's a lot to consider before you get a charger installed at home. Some installations may be trickier than others, and you'll want to get an estimate of how much it will cost before you decide if an electric vehicle is right for your budget. Plus, you may qualify for tax credits or rebates from your electric company.

Some of the experts at CR's Auto Test Center have gone through the process of installing and using an EV charger at their homes and our test track. Their experience can help guide you through the process.

Also read: "Which EVs Can Charge at a Tesla Supercharger?"

For drivers who use their EVs daily, a 240-volt wall charger--sometimes called electric vehicle supply equipment (EVSE)--is practically a must. It increases charging speeds to 25 miles of range per hour of charging or more depending on the vehicle and charger combination. We think it's also a worthwhile investment because charging at home is usually much cheaper than plugging in at public charging stations. And it's clearly more convenient.

If you own a single-family home, the answer is usually yes. (You may have to check with the homeowners association if you have one.) If you have a condo or townhouse, or a shared driveway or garage, the answer might be more complex. You might not be allowed to install a charger at home, or you might have to request permission from your neighbor or your building's management. And if you rent or live in a densely populated city, installing a charger could be a major challenge.

The national average installation cost is \$548 to \$1,382, according to HomeAdvisor, but it could rise to thousands of dollars if you need your wiring upgraded or if you have a charger installed far from your main electrical panel.

When employees of CR's Auto Test Center had chargers installed in their homes in central Connecticut between 2021 and 2022, they paid \$500 to \$4,000 depending on how much work had to be done. The simplest installation involved hardwiring a charger to an already upgraded electrical panel close to a garage. The most expensive installation was in a 200-year-old home where an electrician also had to dig a trench for wiring to a detached garage.

You can get a federal tax credit for installing an EV charger only if you live in a nonurban or low-income community census tract, as defined by the IRS. The Argonne National Laboratory offers a mapping tool so



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that consumers can find out whether they qualify. The credit is generally 30 percent of the cost of the charger, up to \$1,000.

Many states and some localities offer tax credits, and many utility companies offer significant rebates on some smart WiFi-connected EV chargers or for home wiring upgrades necessary to install a charger. Check with your local electricity provider to find out what options are available to you. In addition, some car companies will offer a free charger or a discount on charger installation if you purchase a new EV.

All professional electricians should be able to install an EV charger. Some automakers will connect you with a local electrical contractor if you purchase a charger along with the vehicle. As with all home improvement projects, get multiple estimates and compare them to find the best deal.

Make sure that whomever you hire has insurance, a license to work in your state, and the training to complete your specific installation project.

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