



Best electric car charger 2022

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Car Talk's Recommended Best EV Chargers

Many drivers will want a Level 2 charger at home, though some don't actually need one. Photo credit: Jason Siu / EV Pulse

If you've recently purchased or leased an electric vehicle and are currently shopping for a home charger, congratulations! Welcome to the wonderful world of never having to worry about stopping by a gas station and filling up your tank. But now you've been introduced to a new problem, especially if you live in an area where there isn't a great infrastructure for public charging. We highly recommend all electric vehicle owners, or even plug-in hybrid owners, to have access to home charging. Not just for convenience, but it's generally cheaper than public charging.

There are various things you need to consider when shopping for a home EV charger. For starters, if you're planning to install a Level 2 charger at home, you'll need a 240-volt outlet; and if you're planning to get a hardwired option, you'll want to contact an electrician unless you know what you're doing. Next, you'll want to determine the charging capabilities of your vehicle and its battery pack size. Everyone has a different need when it comes to range, and you'll want to ensure the charger you're buying is capable of giving you the range you need on a daily basis. For example, if you're only needing 10 to 15 miles per day, you may not necessarily need a Level 2 charger.

We'll jump into our recommendations for best home EV chargers first, but past our picks you'll find more information on how to choose the best charger for you.

We're huge fans of the JuiceBox lineup -- in fact, we use one at the office (seen above, commercial version)! It's available in 32-, 40-, and 48-amp versions, depending on your needs. The 32- and 40-amp JuiceBox models can be had either plug-in or hardwired, while the 48-amp model is only available hardwired. We recommend the 40-amp version, which offers up to 9.6 kW and you can choose between a NEMA 14-50 or NEMA 6-50 outlet if you want a plug-in model.

This charger is equipped with Wi-Fi connectivity, so you can control it through a smartphone app, which makes it convenient for you to schedule charging at lower rates. The app will also provide you with notifications when your vehicle is fully charged, and it can even remind you to plug in your vehicle if you're the forgetful type. As a modern solution for a high-tech problem, it's no surprise the JuiceBox 40 is also compatible with Amazon Alexa and Google Home. So yeah, if you want to issue out voice commands to control your charger, go on ahead.

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The residential version of the JuiceBox (seen above) comes equipped with a built-in cable rack for the 25-foot cable, a security lock, and the company provides a three-year manufacturer's warranty. These chargers are indoor and outdoor rated, thanks to a waterproof, dust-tight, polycarbonate casing. Even if you don't necessarily need everything the JuiceBox 40 has to offer with your current electric vehicle, it's still smart to future-proof yourself. It's highly likely you'll get a more advanced EV in the future and you won't have to worry about shopping for a new charger.

The Enel X JuiceBox is bit larger than other EVSEs out there, which is something to consider if you have limited space in your garage. If you want something smaller, look at our next recommendation. And while I still prefer having a separate holster so I can customize the installation in my garage, other users like that it's an all-in-one solution with the holster attached to the charging station. These two points mostly come down to personal preference, but when it comes to reliability and consistent performance, the JuiceBox really can't be beat. Finally, perhaps the biggest negative I found while testing the JuiceBox is its plastic connector. While it is well built, it's only a matter of time before the white finish is full of scratches.

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The particular Pulsar Plus we tested was the 40-amp unit with a NEMA 14-50 plug, but there is a 48-amp version available that needs to be hardwired. The unit comes with a separate holster so you can customize your install and it works well, giving the connector a slight downward angle so it doesn't protrude so much from your wall. It's a smart charger, so you'll need to connect to it with your phone via Bluetooth prior to setting up its WiFi connection. But afterwards, you'll be able to remotely access the Wallbox Pulsar Plus and monitor its status from afar. You can also schedule charging and setup notifications, as I previously mentioned.

The compact home EV charger is UL listed for electrical safety and is NEMA Type 4 rated for water-tightness and dust resistance. This charger has a similar price tags to other smart chargers, but I really love its compact design. It's not perfect though, as I did have some issues connecting to it via Bluetooth, although that could be specific to my device (Pixel 7 Pro). And while it does have one of the better quality connectors I've tested with its rubber finish, the 25-foot power cable isn't as thick as other EV chargers I've evaluated — which may be an issue in cold weather conditions.

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