

A QUICK GUIDE TO MULTIFAMILY ELECTRIC VEHICLE CHARGING



As your Touchstone Energy® cooperative, we want to be your source for energy and information. Since electric vehicles (EVs) are becoming more mainstream, we put together a variety of fact sheets and information to help answer questions you might have.

Contact us for more information about EVs.

Electric vehicles (EVs) are powered by electricity through an outlet or charging station, which allows owners to plug in at their homes, work and public locations. As EVs have grown in popularity, many multifamily communities have begun to add charging as an amenity.

Installing EV charging stations at multifamily communities can bring multiple benefits, but the process is more involved than installing charging in single-family homes. Here are steps and items for multifamily communities to think about as they navigate EV charging:

DEVELOP A CHARGING STRATEGY

Identify short- and long-term goals, discuss budget considerations and funding, and determine a timeline for implementation. Ownership of the charging stations and equipment can come in a few forms: They can be owned by the community, a driver or a third-party vendor. It is important to think through each scenario to decide which option is the best fit.

IDENTIFY A PROJECT CHAMPION

Select an individual to oversee the charging station installation process and program development. Consider a facilities representative, an EV driver or a sustainability manager. Choose someone who can dedicate time to researching and planning to make your charging program a success. It will also be important to have a point of contact responsible for the chargers.

SURVEY RESIDENTS

It can be useful to survey your residents to learn about current and possible future charging demand, commute profiles, the types of EVs they may drive, if they think EV charging will increase the value of their unit/the community, etc. Results will help you decide how many charging stations to install and plan for the future.

CONTACT YOUR ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE

You'll want to involve your electric cooperative early and often in the development of your multifamily charging program. Your cooperative can help you at many steps along the way and can inform you of any rebates, incentives or funding opportunities.

HIRE A CONTRACTOR AND REVIEW YOUR ELECTRICAL ACCESS

Hire a contractor or electrician to manage the installation process. Work with the contractor to develop a site plan. The electrician and your cooperative will help determine if any panel upgrades, service upgrades or new metering is required. Installation is less expensive if the charging equipment is close to an adequate power supply.

SELECT PARKING SPACES

Multifamily communities face similar challenges as public areas in the location and layout of their parking. On-street, public lots, parking decks and driveway parking all offer unique scenarios that will need to be evaluated. Outdoor parking, for example, will require weather-resistant equipment, and public spaces will require safety standards and extra guidelines. It's common to locate stations where amenities already exist, such as pools, visitor parking, playgrounds and clubhouses. Other considerations include overall availability, the potential to add more stations later, proximity to a power source, Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) accessibility and visibility.

SELECT CHARGING STATIONS

Select the charging power level that best fits your needs. The most popular charging for multifamily settings is Level 2. Also, decide if there is a need to track and report charging usage, require RFID activation for charging or remotely check on charger status or availability. If there is, consider a station with network capabilities. These cost more but come with added functionality. Charging station vendors can help you think through these topics.

CONTACT THE PERMITTING OFFICE

Contact your local permit office to see if there are requirements regarding the permitting, installation and inspection of the stations. Work with your contractor to obtain necessary permits and ensure compliance with applicable codes, such as ADA, zoning and encroachment agreements.

INSTALL AND INSPECT EQUIPMENT

Your contractor will handle this step. To save money in the future, plan for charging expansion by installing conduit (and pulling power or communications wires if desired) for additional stations. Annual inspections can also help ensure that connectors and cords are in good condition and not in need of repairs.

CREATE A POLICY

Put together a policy to manage the use of the charging stations, and make sure it is easy to scale as more residents drive EVs. See below for further policy considerations.

PROMOTE THE CHARGING STATION

Host a ribbon-cutting or dedication ceremony, send a press release or plan an EV showcase to promote your new station.

FURTHER POLICY CONSIDERATIONS


A multifamily charging policy is important for navigating specific topics and issues associated with charging, including time limits, driver etiquette, safety, charging fees, signage, enforcement, and maintenance and evaluation. Consider requiring participating residents to sign a copy of the policy to signify their understanding and agreement.

Charging Etiquette. A charging etiquette policy can help avoid potential conflicts that may arise as demand for charging increases. Etiquette policies can include information on what to do once a vehicle is finished charging, how to properly wrap the charging cord when leaving the charging station and who is allowed to use the stations, just residents or guests as well.

Charging to Charge. Multifamily communities may decide to charge a fee for EV charging to recover equipment and installation costs; cover ongoing operating costs, including electric rates and maintenance; generate revenue for future station investment; manage charging station use; and limit unnecessary charging.

Fees can be collected by a parking permit that is managed by the community or by network cards and credit cards, which are usually managed by a third-party vendor. Multifamily communities should consult with their real estate, tax and/or legal representatives to determine which methods are permitted in their area.

Sample Fee Models for Multifamily Charging

	Free	Charge for Power	Charge for Time Parked	Flat fee	Variable Pricing
Details	No fee to charge	Fee per kWh used	Fee per amount of time parked	Flat fee for an entire charging session	Increasing fees with time parked or kWh consumed

With a growing percentage of people living in multifamily communities, these areas offer effective locations for integrating and supporting EVs, and drivers will seek out communities where charging is available. Having a plan and strategy in place will ensure that your charging program is successful and ready for the future.

This article was provided by Advanced Energy, a nonprofit energy consulting firm. For more information, visit www.advancedenergy.org.

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