

Know the 'CARBs' of operating an EV

AAA offers advice before making first purchase

Contemplating the purchase of an electric vehicle can be overwhelming. Questions abound and curiosities kick in. But AAA is here to help by offering a simple way to remember what you need to know. Just manage your CARBs.

AAA conducted a focus group to better understand the first-time drivers' experience in an EV. Respondents reported driving years from 13 to 45 years. Through their points of view, study participants identified that you need to consider these CARBs before or while driving an EV:

CHARGE: EVs rely on batteries to power their motors and propel the wheels into motion. The battery's charge is essential and maintaining a full charge is crucial. To charge an EV, it must be connected to a charging station, which provides the necessary power source. Once connected, the EV's charging port and onboard charger work congruently to convert external power into battery charge. Charging levels include:

- Level 1 (120V) – Charge your EV with Level 1 charging by using a standard household outlet and the 120 volts charging cord that comes with the vehicle.
- Level 2 (240V) – Level 2 charging



IT'S ELECTRIC – First-time EV buyers should be familiar with the levels of charging. Image: Southworks. Adobe Stock.

uses 240 volts, similar to your oven, for faster charging of your EV.

- DC fast charging – These chargers can be found at public-charging stations for a quicker charge time compared to Level 1 and 2 stations. They're ideal if you need a boost of power in a shorter amount of time.

ACCELERATION: EVs generally are faster than gas-powered counterparts. In vehicles, torque is the rotational force created by an engine or motor that turns the wheels to make it move down the road. EVs need less time for energy to make it to the wheels as compared to gasoline cars, which need time for fuel and air to burn and expand in the engine.

RIDE: EVs don't emit engine or exhaust noise, making them quieter than their gas counterparts. A slight sound from their tires and mild wind noise make EVs quiet to drive. Handling of the vehicle can be appreciated more because of the low center of gravity, making the EV easier to turn at reasonable speeds. Inside, the vehicle-user interface dashboard incorporates modern technology and influences how users interact with EVs.

BRAKE: Brake pads create friction to slow the wheels' movement in gas-powered cars. The friction turns some of the kinetic energy of wheel rotation into heat and slows the vehicle. In an EV, the system automatically uses the electric drivetrain (depending on the settings) that can cause the car to slow down without engaging the brake pedal – known as regenerative braking. The EV captures the energy released during the braking process and uses it to recharge its battery. This makes EVs more efficient and helps extend their overall range. A "jarring" feeling often kicks in the moment the driver takes their foot off the acceleration pedal.

Most EVs allow the adjustment to the sensitivity of regenerative braking. Setting it to a minimum will help avoid the harsh sensation.

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