

Hotel and Campground Charging

When building out the electric vehicle (EV) charging infrastructure, much emphasis has been placed on DC Fast Chargers that will charge an EV from 20-80% in 20-40 minutes (depending on the vehicle and the charger). However, Level 2 charging at overnight accommodations works just like charging overnight at home. This can help you start your day with a full battery and one less charging stop along the way.

Hotels and Bed & Breakfasts

So how do you go about finding hotels or a bed & breakfast (B&B) along your route? While this can be an iterative process, it's often worth the effort because of the promise of a full battery and warmed up car in the morning.

- Find an area where you want to stay. If just passing through, consider staying outside of metro areas since the prices tend to be lower. Use a mapping tool like Google Maps to find hotels or even a good B&B in the area. Some hotel search services even include EV chargers in their search filters.
- Use [PlugShare](#) to find hotels in the area that have Level 2 chargers, making sure to look at the rating and recent comments.
- If there are no hotels with Level 2 chargers in your area, look for other Level 2 chargers or DC Fast Chargers at nearby businesses. If it's nearby but too far to walk, perhaps drop a folding bike or scooter into the trunk to get there. But be sure to review PlugShare check-ins and pictures of the site. Some locations may close gates or shut off power to a charger after business hours.
- If struggling to find an appropriate site, I also check the apps or web pages from charging networks like ChargePoint, Electrify America, Blink, EVGo, SemaConnect or whatever is prevalent in the area. Sometimes EVSEs are added and nobody has discovered them and added them on PlugShare.
- As a backup plan, look for Superchargers or DC Fast Chargers nearby in case the hotel Level 2 charger is broken, being used, or blocked.
- If all else fails, look for an external 120V outlet where your car's charging cord won't create a trip hazard, ask for permission from the hotel, then at least get 1.5 KW or about 30 miles of range overnight



Maximize Your Chance for Success



Once you're on the road, consider calling ahead to the hotel or B&B to see if they can block the parking space associated with the EV charger with a traffic cone so that it won't get ICed (blocked by an ICE vehicle) before you get there.

If the charger is blocked by another vehicle not plugged in, one way to get more reach to the charger is to carry a [J1772 extension cord](#). A 20+ foot cord specially designed for this purpose may be enough to reach an adjacent parking spot. Some overnight accommodations have chargers with both J1772 plugs and Tesla plugs. If the Tesla chargers are not being used and your car uses a J1772 charging port, it might be useful to have a Tesla to J1772 adapter. We wrote about these in more detail in the last EV eNewsletter, but [Inside EVs has a great overview article](#) and [video](#) of how these are used and what might fit your needs. Note that these do not work on Tesla Superchargers.

Charging at Campgrounds

Full-sized RVs with power-hungry devices like air conditioners and clothing dryers use a lot of power. Therefore, many RV parks are equipped with 240V 50A RV plugs. As it turns out, that standard plug, also called a NEMA 14-50 is perfect for EV charging. If your car has a high-power charging cable, chances are the plug is a NEMA 14-50 and can use the 50A RV plug found in most modern campgrounds.

Find a campground that has electricity at the campsite. Make sure you reserve a campsite with 50A power plugs. The 30A TT-30 receptacles are 120V only and not compatible with NEMA 14-50 plugs and would require a different adapter. Some campgrounds charge an extra fee for EV charging, so check with the management to see if that's required.

To use the 50A RV plug, turn off the 50A breaker, plug in your NEMA 14-50 capable charging cable, turn on the breaker and look for power lights on the charging cable box to ensure proper grounding and function. Then just plug the J1772 plug into your vehicle, and it should start charging.



EV Etiquette Goes a Long Way

Assuming you've successfully found an overnight parking spot and plugged in, consider leaving a note on your car or an EV hang tag to let other EV drivers know when you'll be done charging. If you don't need all night to charge your vehicle, perhaps you can move your vehicle and offer the plug to another driver. Sometimes a quick phone call or text message can make all the difference, so consider leaving your cell phone number as a way for other EV drivers to reach you. If you're a Consumers Energy customer and would like a complimentary EV etiquette hang tag, email us at PowerMIDrive@cmsenergy.com to get one mailed to you.

If another driver is already plugged into the only charger, try leaving a note on their car to please plug you in and park near the charger with your charge port open to signal your need to charge.



Final Thoughts

In addition to DC Fast Chargers for your EV travels, the Consumers Energy [PowerMIDrive](#) program continues to help even more hotels and B&Bs add chargers over the next few years to energize your EV travels. Find out where at ConsumersEnergy.com/ev.