WHEELS

ELECTRIC VEHICLES 101

Getting Help and Staying Safe

ROADSIDE

Thousands of drivers a year rely on roadside assistance services for a range of mechanical and towing solutions which are designed for conventional combustion engine (ICE) vehicles. So, how is the experience different for EV drivers?

- First, careful planning for longer journeys by using a route planning app is even more important in an EV to avoid a depleted battery.
- The process to obtain roadside service is the same for an EV – follow your company's guidelines and contact the number provided.
- Towing can be tricky with EVs because they do not have a true neutral gear; many manufacturers recommend loading an EV onto a flatbed truck for roadside recovery.
- We recommend keeping charging leads and adapters in your vehicle to enable charging at any electrical outlet in an emergency.

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SAFETY

EVs are considered as safe if not safer than their ICE counterparts. They must meet the Federal Motor Vehicle Safety Standards by undergoing rigorous safety testing in addition to safety standards specific to EVs. But there are a few things to keep in mind when it comes to EV safety.

- They are designed with battery packs contained in sealed shells and insulated high-voltage lines and other safety features that deactivate the electrical system when they detect a collision or short circuit.
- To prevent additional hazards and risk of serious injuries, the U.S. Fire Administration recommends the following safety tips for drivers and passengers involved in EV accidents:
  - Inform all emergency responders that the vehicle is electric.
  - Assume the vehicle is fully powered, even after a crash.
  - Roll down the windows before shutting off the engine.
  - Remove the ignition key and keep at least 16 feet away from the vehicle.
  - Do not touch the engine compartment, battery, exposed electrical components, or any wiring under the hood that can cause electrical shock.
  - Maintain a safe distance from any electric vehicle that has suffered extensive damage.
- There are additional safety tips for EVs that have been involved in a crash but not yet repaired:
  - Contact an authorized service provider or vehicle manufacturer for repairs. Individuals should not attempt to repair a damaged electric vehicle.
  - Report any leaking fluids, bubbling, sparks, or smoke coming from the car's high voltage battery.
  - Do not store the vehicle in a building, or within 50 feet of any combustible materials.
  - Damage to the high voltage system in an electric vehicle can result in a delayed release of toxic fumes or flammable gasses.

This information about EV roadside and safety is all important to know. But there is good news too. The Insurance Institute for Highway Safety notes that "EVs have a 40% lower injury claim rate than cars with a gas-powered engine" which can be explained by the weight and weight distribution making them more stable and reduces the likelihood of the cars rolling over.

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