

Commercial Charging Installation Guide

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Below is a guide to follow when approaching a commercial electric vehicle (EV) charging project; whether you're entertaining the idea of doing so, already in the process of one, or strictly reading for educational purposes to learn more about the process. Each charging project is different, each with their own goals, use cases, challenges, and strategies. This guide was designed to help you work through your own unique circumstance and give you the tools you need to approach the subject in an informed way.

Colorado's ReCharge Coaches provide coaching services for electric vehicles and charging infrastructure in every county. Contact your region's ReCharge Coach to get support on identifying grant and funding opportunities.

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For an updated list on Colorado's Recharge Coaches, visit: https://energyoffice.colorado.gov/transportation/ev-education-resources/recharge-colorado

GLOSSARY OF TERMS AND ACRONYMS



Electric Vehicle (EV) - An automotive-type vehicle for on-road use, including without limitation passenger automobiles, buses, trucks, vans, neighborhood electric vehicles, and electric motorcycles, primarily powered by an electric motor that draws current from a building electrical service, EVSE, a rechargeable storage battery, a fuel cell, a photovoltaic array, or another source of electric current, but excluding off-road, self-propelled electric mobile equipment, including without limitation industrial trucks, hoists, lifts, transports, golf carts, airline ground support equipment, tractors, and boats are not considered EVs.

EV Supply Equipment (EVSE) - An EV charging system or device that is used to provide electricity to a plug-in EV or plug-in hybrid EV, is designed to ensure that a safe connection has been made between the electrical grid and the vehicle and is able to communicate with the vehicle's control system so that electricity flows at an appropriate voltage and current level. (i.e. charging stations)

DCFC - Direct Current Fast Charging (Level 3 charger)

ADA - American Disabilities Act

Electrical Capacity - the maximum amount of electricity a system can handle before it malfunctions or becomes unsafe.

CEO - Colorado Energy Office

STEPS TO INSTALLING A CHARGING STATION



Photo from Mountain View Electric Association's ribbon-cutting event, celebrating the first-ever public EV chargers in Falcon.

Identify Your Need

Determining your charging needs is a crucial first step for any charging station project. Choosing the right charging level (Level 1, 2, or 3) depends on typical parking dwell times. The right choice strikes a balance between cost and user needs. Consider who will be using the station (residents, employees, fleet vehicles, or the public) and how long they typically park at the location. For commercial applications, Level 2 and Level 3 (DC Fast or Direct Current Fast) are most common, catering to customer dwell times and business needs. Accurate site electrical assessments prevent costly surprises and are a great initial step. Properly aligning charging level with anticipated demand maximizes return on investment and promotes EV adoption through a good user experience.



Photo source: Lifewire

Types of Chargers

	Level 1 (AC)	Level 2 (AC)	Level 3 (DC)
Voltage (approx.)	120V	208V - 240V	480V
kW Power (approx.)	1.4kW	7 - 19 kW	20+ kW
Speed of Charge	Slow	Medium	Fast
Typical Range Added Per Hour	2 - 5 miles	10 - 20 miles	20 - 80+ miles
Estimated Time to Full Charge	24+ hours	6 - 8 hours	30 - 90 minutes
Best for	Plug-In Hybrids. Very long dwell times. Low vehicle utilization.	Extended or overnight dwell times. Fleet vehicles.	High vehicle utilization. Public and emergency applications.
Common Locations	Homes, multi-family units with garages, workplaces, parking near outlets.	Homes, multi-family units, workplaces, fleet depots, parking structures.	Gas stations / rest stops, businesses near highways, public fast- charging stations, fleet depots, businesses with short customer dwell times.
Installation & Potential Electrical Upgrades	Easy installation with no upgrades usually necessary. Plugs into a standard 120V outlet.	Requires an electrician to install a dedicated circuit. Panel upgrades may be required	Requires significant panel / service upgrades.

Additional Considerations

- What are your charging needs?
 - On average, how long are vehicles parked at your site (dwell time)?
 - How many parking spaces do you have?
 - What is the number of expected users at the site?
 - What level of charging fits your needs?
- Who will have access to the stations? (public/customers, employees, fleet vehicles, residents, or a combination)
- How often would the chargers be used? Is this a high or low trafficked location? Do you have defined hours of operation for the chargers?



Photo from a "plug-in" ceremony at The Faricy Boys Automotive in Salida, celebrating their expanded EV fleet and new fast chargers.

Contact Your Utility

It is crucial to contact your electric utility provider early in the planning stages of your charging station project. They can assess your electrical capacity (including needed upgrades), support permitting and inspections, inform you of rebates and incentives, help determine site and charger needs, and ensure a safe and reliable installation. Communication is key.

Check out some Colorado electric utility providers:

- Black Hills Energy
- Colorado Energy Office Electric Utility Map
- Poudre Valley Rural Electric Associatio
- Mountain View Electric Association
- Tri-State Generation and Transmission Association.
- United Power
- Xcel Energy

If your electric utility is not listed above, find your utility on the <u>Colorado Energy Office Electric Utility Map.</u>

If upgrades are necessary, engage in discussions with your utility to plan the next steps and establish timelines. Obtaining the required power for a site may take several months or even years if the upgrade is substantial. Make sure to ask questions about potential incentives offered by your utility for charging infrastructure or equipment; your utility may provide you with infrastructure upgrades at low to no cost. You may also consider deploying solar or battery storage to your site alongside the charging hardware to supplement power needs.

Determine and Assess the Installation Site

A successful EV charging station depends on a well-chosen location. A thorough site evaluation considers electrical capacity, accessibility, safety, visibility, and nearby amenities. Optimizing these factors ensures user attraction, cost-effective installation, regulatory compliance, and seamless integration. A good location maximizes driver convenience, supports business goals, and strengthens charging infrastructure. See the table below for more considerations:

Category	Considerations	
Infrastructure and Electrical Capacity	Choose areas that minimize the need for concrete trenching and other intrusive and expensive site alterations. The closer a charging station is located to the power source (electrical panel), the lower the installation costs. Keep this in mind when choosing spaces to dedicate for charging. Your utility can help identify your power source.	
Accessibility and Location	Ensure that the planned EV parking spaces are large enough to accommodate all vehicle sizes and have adequate clearance for those with accessibility needs (ADA Compliance) as needed. For public stations, locations with nearby amenities such as restaurants, shops, and/or restrooms make it more convenient for EV drivers to use your charging station. Choose a location that is easy to find, access, and is visible to drivers. Consider your audience. Who are the chargers intended for? Identify locations that are frequently visited by the target audience.	
Safety and Security	Look for well-lit areas that have security camera coverage and emergency access.	
Environmental Factors	Choose a location that is protected from environmental conditions. This can include areas with good drainage to prevent flooding. Consider cell signal or wi-fi availability for networking and payment options. If you are in a location with unreliable cell service, make sure the charger you install is WiFi and/or ethernet compatible.	
Other factors	Consider the average dwell time of vehicles at the site. If you plan to add more charging stations, choose a location that can accommodate future expansion. In addition, talk to your utility and electrician about adding more electrical capacity for future stations to reduce installation costs and project timelines. Consider what existing EV chargers are nearby. Inquire about their use to get an idea of demand.	

Contact Your City/County

Before installing your charging station, research local codes and permitting requirements within your city or county. EV charging stations may require proper permits and electrical inspections, including zoning approvals and other necessary permits *before* installation can begin.

For questions about building energy codes, including Electric Ready and Solar Ready Codes, you can use the Colorado Energy Office <u>Code Helpline</u> or view all <u>Colorado Building Energy Codes by jurisdiction.</u>

Anticipate Project Costs

Anticipating total project costs and potential expenses allows you to intelligently approach an EV charging station project. Thorough research on different EVSE options is essential, and obtaining 2-3 quotes from various providers allows for cost comparison and informed decision-making. These quotes should detail equipment, labor, warranty terms, permitting fees, networking costs, and any other ancillary fees, providing a comprehensive view of expected expenses. Should you need help in getting connected with a contractor or service provider, utilities and charger manufacturers often have a list of trained and preferred vendors. Careful cost analysis, considering all these factors, will help you budget effectively and avoid unexpected financial burdens.



Photo from the City of Westminster's ribbon-cutting ceremony and workplace charging event, unveiling their new EV charging stations.



Photo from 4CORE's event, celebrating the successful installation of a new EV charging station. This milestone supports local clean transportation efforts and expands charging accessibility in the region.

Apply for Funding Opportunities

Now that you've completed the essential groundwork of planning and site assessment, you're in a prime position to explore funding opportunities to help subsidize the project. A word of caution: Most grant programs have strict rules against starting construction or installation before receiving funding approval. Prematurely beginning work could jeopardize your eligibility and ability to be reimbursed for costs incurred before receiving the grant. Carefully review the program guidelines of any funding program you are considering taking advantage of to ensure proper compliance. The following are examples of several different funding opportunities in Colorado:

<u>Charge</u> <u>Ahead</u> Colorado

- Administered through the Colorado Energy Office.
- Intended to be used to fund chargers with public access.

Fleet-ZERO

- Administered through the Colorado Energy Office.
- Intended to be used to fund fleet-dedicated chargers.

<u>Drive Clean</u> <u>Colorado</u> Website

- A comprehensive list of funding opportunities.
- Funding options for both chargers and vehicles are included.

In addition to everything mentioned above, you may be eligible for federal tax credits, grants through your local electrical utility, and grants through your local City / Town. ReCharge Coaches at the Colorado Energy Office can help determine every funding option available to you! Access the <u>ReCharge page</u> to get connected.

Installation

Installing an EV charging station involves several key steps, and the timeline can vary based on charger type and site conditions. The following timeline outlines the general installation process. Please note this timeline does not consider grant funding requirements:

- 1. Preliminary Planning and Site Evaluation:
 - a. Milestone: Secured and finalized site design layout.
- 2. Procurement:
 - a. Milestone: Confirmation of equipment orders and finalized agreements with partners.
- 3. Utility Coordination and Service Upgrades:
 - a. Milestone: All required permits obtained and service upgrades completed.
- 4. Installation:
 - a. Milestone: Physical installation of all chargers completed.
- 5. Quality Assurance and Testing:
 - a. Milestone: Successful test results obtained and chargers are functional.
- 6. Launch and Public Engagement:
 - a. Milestone: Charging station becomes fully operational and accessible to users.
- 7. Monitoring and Feedback:
 - a. Milestone: Continuous improvement mechanisms established.



Operation and Maintenance

Effective maintenance is essential for ensuring the reliability and longevity of an EV charging station. Generally, charging maintenance intervals are defined by the charger manufacturer. Warranty coverage is highly recommended as it can cover repair and damage costs. However, vandalism or accidental damage is typically not covered. The <u>Alternative Fuel Data Center</u> suggests defining roles and responsibilities related to charger operation and maintenance and establishing someone to be responsible. This can be the site host, charging provider, installer, or a third-party organization. All this will lead to a higher charger uptime percentage which will result in a better user experience and more efficient operation. We suggest aiming for a charger uptime of 95% or greater.

Operation and maintenance of charging stations can include:

- Monitoring EV charger usage, power consumption, and availability through charger management software tools.
- Monitoring potential problems such as power outages and equipment failures.
- Performing regular and preventive maintenance such as storing charging cables securely, checking parts periodically, and keeping equipment clean.
- Monitoring payment processing management.

BEST PRACTICES AND ADDITIONAL RESOURCES



Photo from a ribbon-cutting event at Ready Foods, celebrating the installation of three new EV chargers.

Charger Ownership Models

Understanding charger ownership models is a key factor when implementing charging infrastructure. When determining which business model to implement, it is important to consider anticipated demand, charger type, location, and desired benefits. Site operators can choose between several different business models to determine how a charging site can be managed. Three example models are detailed below:

Owner-Operator Business Model: The site host owns and operates the site infrastructure entirely. This includes full authority and responsibility by the site host over permitting, planning, maintenance, operational costs, and charging fees.

Advantages:

- · Complete control over pricing
- Consistent
- High-profit potential
- Optimization of charging station behavior and experience
- Charger management over own terms

Disadvantages

- Responsible for station maintenance, operational costs
- Detailed knowledge of electricity rate structures recommended
- · Requires continuous coordination with utilities
- Less reliable information on external factors
- More likely to assume risks

Third Party Owner-Operator Business Model: The site host partners with a third party to take some or all responsibility for a charging station. These responsibilities include ownership, operation, maintenance, and financial responsibilities, but are discussed between parties upon agreement.

Advantages

- Limited exposure to operational cost overruns
- Limited exposure to unexpected maintenance
- Limited exposure to complicated utility relationships
- Limited financial risks
- Flexible terms between two parties

Disadvantage

- Little control over customer experience
- Limited profit potential
- Costly

Charging-as-a-Service (CaaS) Business Model: An EVSE service provider installs, owns, maintains, and monitors the charging infrastructure at a given location and leases it to the site host. This business model includes a service agreement which may also entail support with infrastructure maintenance and operation.

Advantages

- 24/7 driver support
- Greater flexibility
- Reduces upfront cost for site host
- Site host not responsible for maintenance and associated costs
- Quick uptime/efficient

Disadvantages

- Site host pays a monthly fee in addition to service chargers
- Service agreement terms
- Site host has little control over customer experience



This photo is from a media event in Wheat Ridge celebrating the completion of the EV Fast-Charging Corridors program— a major milestone in expanding Colorado's statewide fast-charging network.

Maintenance Plans and Warranties

Charger manufacturers typically offer a variety of warranty options for their products. These can include:

- Standard Manufacturer's Warranty: This is typically included with the purchase of the charger and covers defects in materials for a specified period.
- Extended Warranty: Manufacturers may offer extended warranty options for an additional cost, which can extend the coverage beyond the standard warranty period. Extended warranties may provide additional protection against unexpected failures or malfunctions.
- Service Contracts: Manufacturers or third-party service providers may offer service contracts that provide ongoing maintenance, support, and repair services for the charger beyond the warranty period. These contracts may include options for regular maintenance visits, troubleshooting support, and replacement parts.

Charging Rate Structures

Pricing Models

Appropriate pricing of EV charging fees is crucial for charging network success. Operators must understand their costs, including maintenance, electricity, installation, and network fees, to create fair and effective pricing strategies that ensure profitability and long-term sustainability. Additionally, the design of fee structures both attract or deter usage. When setting fees, consider covering all costs while also ensuring equity and meeting community needs. Charging fees, whether directly covering operating costs or acknowledging indirect benefits like attracting customers to a business, are generally necessary. Since fees are closely tied to usage, strategically locating charging stations in high-traffic areas like parking lots/garages, workplaces, and multifamily dwellings helps maximize utilization and return on investment. A well-designed pricing strategy balances cost recovery with user affordability and convenience.

For public Level 2 charging stations, the Colorado Energy Office recommends prices between \$0.12 and \$0.35/kWh, with the Electric Power Research Institute (EPRI) reporting an average price of \$0.28/kWh. In 2024, the most common price point in the state of Colorado fell between \$0.20 and \$0.30/kWh.

DC Fast Chargers (DCFC) or Level 3 chargers can cost more to charge due to a higher electrical demand. As of January 2024, the average price for DCFCs in Colorado is \$0.36/kWh, with the Colorado Energy Office recommending prices between \$0.35 and \$0.45/kWh. According to AFDC, Colorado sees a range from \$0.30 to \$0.75/kWh. The nationwide average, as reported by EPRI, is \$0.32/kWh.

As a general rule, reach out to your electric utility and determine what you are paying per kWh during normal and peak-demand times. They may even have programs for negotiating down your rate for energy dedicated to EV charging. You can then structure your pricing around what you are paying.

Comparison Chart of EV charging pricing structures for public, multi-family, workplace chargers:

Pricing Model				
Fee Structure	Advantages	Limitations	Pricing Example	Use Case Example(s)
Free EV drivers do not pay for charging	 Offers relief from financial cost. Promotes the utilization of public chargers and attracts individuals to specific locations. Simple, no extra costs to the consumer. 	 The owner is responsible for covering the costs of electricity. Installation and operation costs may not be recouped. People may park without charging or leave their EV parked after it's fully charged, resulting in station availability issues. 	• n/a	Used to incentivize EV charger use for a set period of time on a lowuse or new EV charger Used to the charger incentive to the charger incentive to the charge incentive to
Per-kWh EV drivers pay for the actual electricity consumed (measured in kWh)	 Accounts for electricity consumed by the vehicle, rather than solely focusing on the rate at which it accepts electricity, making it fairer for all EVs, regardless of charging speed Fairway to ensure users pay for the electricity they are using. Rates can consider installation/ operation costs 	Per-kWh, or metered charging can be more expensive to install.	• \$0.20 per kWh	Public chargers, fair pricing based on actual energy use

Additional options for EV charging pricing

Fee Structure	Advantages	Limitations	Pricing Example	Use Case Example
Per-hour EV drivers pay a fixed rate per hour of charging	 Fees can consider operational costs, such as maintenance and network services. Encourages turnover after charging is done Simple to understand 	 Penalizes those who have vehicles that charge slower than others. Can result in very expensive cost to users which may decrease the use of the charger 	• \$1.50 per hour for Level 2 charging	Level 2 chargers in workplaces, parking lots, and commercial areas.
Flat Rate (per-session) One price for an entire charging session.	 Fees can cover installation and operation costs. Simple system. 	 Penalizes those who have vehicles that charge slower than others. Unpredictable usage of service. Owner must set up a clear policy around pricing structure. Could be unfair for short charging sessions 	• \$5 per session (regardle ss of time or energy used)	Can incentivize either short or long charging sessions. Simple pricing mechanism in locations with short charging sessions (e.g., retail, restaurants).
Time of Use	 Incentivizes off-peak charging when the energy is cheaper. Lowers demand during high demand hours/days. Potential to incentivize charging when the grid is using cleaner energy. May support utility incentives. 	 Negatively impacts those who are unable to charge during off- peak hours. Can be complex and difficult to track 	• n/a	• n/a

Additional options for EV charging pricing

Fee Structure	Advantages	Limitations	Pricing Example	Use Case Example
Subscription Packages Users pay a monthly fee for unlimited or discounted charging.	 Incentive to keep charging at that location/charging network. A perk for frequent users that workplace/location. Provides steady revenue from the chargers Combine a Subscription Package with another pricing structure for one-time users if the charger is public 	Can be costly for non- subscribers.	• \$30/month for unlimited charging at workplace chargers.	Workplace, apartment complexes, fleet charging, and loyalty programs.
Tiered Pricing (Time + Energy) Combines per- kWh pricing with a time- based fee after a certain period.	 Ensures a consistent turnover of vehicles. Beneficial for limited parking spots. Encourages the movement of fully charged vehicles. 	 Can deter people from charging at the location. More complex for EV drivers. 	• \$0.20 per kWh for the first 2 hours. After 2 hours, add \$5 per hour to encourage turnover.	High-demand areas where turnover is important.
Idle Fee	 Prevents vehicles from sitting idle in parking spots once a charge is complete.> Ensures the turnover of vehicles by encouraging the movement of fully charged vehicles Allows for more access to chargers. 	 Can be costly for users if not communicated properly. Will not prevent "ICE-ing" of chargers 	• n/a	• n/a
Parking Fee	Parking fees are often coupled with pricing structures listed above to cover costs of operation, maintenance, and replacement.	 Added fee of parking coupled with charging could turn away potential users. 	• EV Charging fee plus a standard parking fee	Parking lots

Parking and Signage Considerations

ADA Compliance

Source: AFDC Summary of Important ADA Requirements (Page 3)

Best Practices for Designing ADA-Compliant Charging Stations

When designing ADA-compliant charging stations, consider accessibility, ease of use, and safety for disabled drivers, including those using wheelchairs or other assistive equipment. Key considerations include ensuring adequate space for exiting and entering the vehicle, unobstructed access to the EVSE, free movement around the EVSE and connection point on the vehicle, as well as clear paths and close proximity to any building entrances.

Summary of Important ADA Requirements

Element	Requirements (ADA/ABA 2004 ANSI A117.1 2003)
Number of Spaces	4% of parking spaces, or 1 for every 25 spaces, in any given lot, be designated as accessible; 1 out of every 6 spaces should be van accessible.
Parking Stall	8x18 feet for a car and 11x18 feet for a van.
Accessible Route Width	Minimum 36 inches wide.
Accessible Route Slope/ Cross Slope	Maximum 1:20 (5%) running slope and 1:48 (2%) cross slope; Accessible vehicle spaces 1:48 (2%) in all directions and 90-inch clearance for vans.
Reach Range	48 inches front and side to allow reach to all operable parts from a wheelchair.
Accessible Controls	Operable with one hand and not requiring grasping, pinching, or twisting of the wrist or force more than 5 lbs. Exception: Gas pumps.
Accessible Ramps	A ramp or curb-cut must be accessible in order to allow for operation of charging station.
Facility Accessibility	Must be connected by a minimum of 50-inch-wide accessible route in proximity (not necessarily adjacent) to the entrance of the building.
Side Access Aisle	Side access aisle of 60 inches wide to allow space for wheelchair and equipment in and out of space.
Accessible Card Reading Devices	Must be connected by a minimum 50-inch-wide accessible route in proximity (not necessarily adjacent) to the entrance of the building.
Other Considerations	Ensure that bollards, wheel stops, or curb do not obstruct use of charging station.

Please access the CEO <u>EV Charging Station Accessibility Guidance Document</u> for more information.

Signage

Source: Alternative Fuels Data Center: Signage for Electric Vehicle Charging Stations

Signage for electric vehicle (EV) charging stations is an important consideration at workplaces, public charging stations, parking garages, and multifamily housing that offer access to EV charging infrastructure.



Above is an example of signage at an EV charging station stating that there is no parking allowed expect for while charging your vehicle. The signage also states that non electric vehicles parked in the space can be fined up to \$150.

Appropriate charging station signage can:

- Help EV drivers navigate to and identify charging stations.
- Optimize use of charging infrastructure by helping all drivers understand that parking spaces at charging stations are for EVs only.
- Provide information about policies—such as access, time limits, and hours of use—and facilitate enforcement.
- Enable uptake of EVs by providing visibility for charging infrastructure to prospective EV drivers.
- Identify charging station corridors.

Signage for charging stations falls into two categories: wayfinding signage and station signage.

- Wayfinding Signage
 - Wayfinding signage helps EV drivers navigate to charging stations from other locations, such as a freeway exit.
- Station Signage
 - Station signage helps EV drivers identify charging stations. It also helps charging station hosts communicate and enforce policies related to the use of the charging infrastructure and associated parking spaces. For example, a station host may decide that spaces are associated with charging.
 - Pavement markings, painted on the surface of a parking space, can be used to reinforce station signage for charging stations as well.

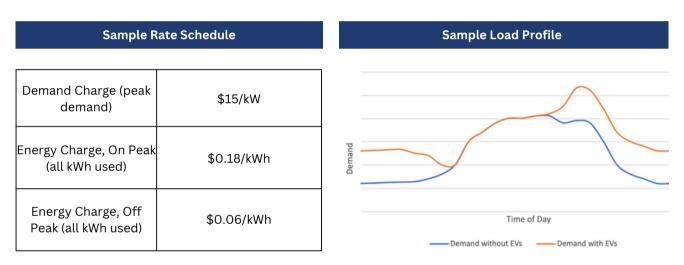
Charger Hardware and Software

Hardware

There are many different options available for EV charging hardware, each with their own associated advantages and disadvantages. Make sure the connector type of the charging hardware you chose properly interfaces with the vehicles you will have in operation and the charging speed properly supports the utilization of those vehicles.

Software

Most EV chargers can be managed through a charger management software. This allows you to remotely connect to your charger(s) where you can manage charge rates, control and set rules for authentication and accessibility, troubleshoot issues, view important data points, and much more. This software can either be built-in by the charging manufacturer or will need to be purchased and integrated separately. It is important to note that this is required for some grant programs.



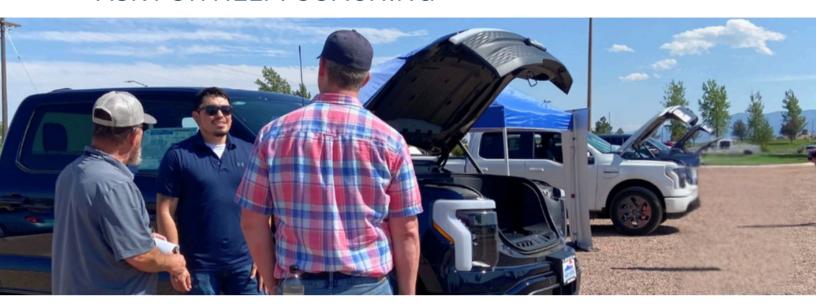
Example of how EV charging can increase utility demand charges.

Optimizing Your Charging Software Experience

Source: Drive Clean Colorado Fleet Electrification Guide

- Manage time and duration of charge to avoid on-peak rates and increased demand charges.
- Manage authentication protocol to control charger usage (credit card, RFID, etc..).
- If applicable, leverage on-site microgrid capabilities and renewable energy data to align energy production with vehicle charging. This can help offset electricity costs.
- If applicable, find software that makes reporting for grants, incentives, internal purposes, and customer use as streamlined as possible.

ASK FOR HELP: COACHING



As you can see from the information outlined in this document, there are many different moving pieces in an EV charging project and a variety of different ways of approaching them. There are unique strategies for public use, workplace, multi-family unit, and fleet-dedicated charging projects. Recharge Coaches at the Colorado Energy Office provide coaching services for electric vehicles (EVs) and charging infrastructure in every county in Colorado. They are experts in the field and are here to help. Reach out using the contact information below to talk through different scenarios, use cases, best practices, incentives, case studies, and more. In addition, they can connect you with a wide network of industry professionals who will serve as an invaluable resource throughout your EV charging journey. For more information and to reach a ReCharge Coach in your region, please access the Colorado Energy Office ReCharge page! You can also learn more by accessing the various different organization websites in Colorado related to the different ReCharge coaches: Drive Clean Colorado, CLEER, and 4CORE.

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