

# What to Do if Your Electric Vehicle Runs Out of Charge?



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Imagine driving down the road, only to realize that your electric vehicle (EV) doesn't have enough charge to reach your destination, and you can't spot a charging station nearby. It's a situation that EV owners dread. In the era of traditional gas-powered cars, running out of fuel meant a quick trip to the nearest gas station, or even a friend bringing you a can of fuel as a temporary fix. However, with EVs becoming increasingly popular, the challenges are different. Charging stations are still not as widespread as gas stations, making it crucial to know how to avoid running out of charge and what to do if it happens.

#### **1. Analyzing Your Digital Gauges**

Unlike older gas-powered vehicles with tiny fuel gauges, EVs provide drivers with a wealth of digital information about range, battery regeneration, and more. Familiarize

1

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yourself with your EV's gauges and understand when warning lights for low range will appear and what they signify. Manufacturers like Nissan and Volvo design their electric cars with clear and accessible dash displays to help you stay informed.

## 2. Conserve Energy

In the world of EVs, there's a community of "hypermilers" who actively test the limits of battery range. They employ strategies such as driving gently, avoiding aggressive acceleration, closing windows and sunroofs to reduce drag, turning off the car in heavy traffic, and ensuring proper tire inflation for optimal rolling resistance. By adopting these energy-saving practices, you can maximize your EV's range and potentially avoid running out of charge.

## 3. Slow Down and Stay Alert

Similar to gas-powered vehicles, pressing the accelerator forcefully consumes more energy in EVs. Therefore, it's essential to be mindful of your acceleration and overall speed. Slowing down to the speed limit and staying in the right lane can help you maintain a safe and efficient driving experience. If your battery level drops significantly, some EVs may activate a feature that slows down the vehicle automatically to conserve energy. In such cases, follow the car's lead.

## 4. Reached Zero? Proceed with Caution

Different EV models behave differently when their batteries are depleted. Most manufacturers include a buffer range that can provide you with additional miles of travel after reaching zero. If you're close to a charging station and confident you can make it, proceed carefully and take advantage of the buffer range. However, keep in mind that fully depleting your battery isn't ideal for its long-term health, so it's important to recharge it as soon as possible.

## 5. Safely Pull Over

If you find yourself running out of charge despite your best efforts, start looking for a safe place to pull over before your vehicle comes to a complete stop. This is

particularly crucial if you're on a highway, where it's essential to plan your exit and locate a suitable parking lot or space where a flatbed tow truck can assist you.

### **6. Try Restarting the Vehicle**

Once you've safely parked, consider giving your EV a restart after a brief pause. While it may seem like a long shot, some EVs respond positively to a restart and might offer you a few extra miles to reach a charging station. It's worth a try in desperate situations.

### **7. Check the Manufacturer's Tow Coverage**

Certain automakers provide complimentary towing services with the purchase of a new EV. For example, Ford offers tow coverage for the Mustang Mach-E if the battery runs out of charge within the first five years or 60,000 miles, ensuring that you can be towed to the nearest public charger, home, or a Ford dealership. Similarly, Nissan offers a comparable guarantee for its EVs, such as the Ariya, with flatbed towing for up to five years or 60,000 miles. Flatbed towing is crucial to prevent any potential hazards related to spinning wheels and power generation by the motors.

### **8. Avoid Pushing the EV**

Electric vehicles are typically heavier than gas-powered vehicles due to the weight of their batteries. Attempting to push an EV to a charging station can be physically demanding and may not yield favorable results. Instead, rely on the assistance of a tow truck to transport your EV safely.

### **9. Summon Portable Fast Chargers**

Some roadside assistance services, like AAA, have implemented innovative solutions to address range anxiety. They now offer specialized trucks equipped with mobile electric vehicle chargers that can provide enough range to get drivers home or to the nearest charging station. While this service is currently available in limited areas, it's an encouraging development that can provide peace of mind to EV owners facing low battery situations on the road.

## 10. Contact Roadside Assistance

If all else fails and you're unable to reach your destination, it's time to contact your vehicle's roadside assistance service, AAA, or a local tow truck with a flatbed. They can rescue you and your EV, transporting it to a charging station or back home to recharge. Promptly recharging the battery is essential for its longevity. And in the future, be sure to allow for additional range padding to prevent similar incidents.

By understanding your EV's digital gauges, conserving energy, driving responsibly, and being prepared for emergencies, you can navigate the challenges of running out of charge in an electric vehicle with confidence. Remember, planning ahead and making informed decisions are key to a seamless and enjoyable electric driving experience.