

The electric vehicle landscape comes with its own vocabulary, and unfamiliar terms can make early conversations about electrification feel more complicated than they need to be. This glossary provides clear, plain-language definitions of commonly used EV, charging, and utility terms to help fleet owners, operators, and drivers communicate more confidently and make informed decisions.

Alternating Current (AC):

Electricity supplied by the power grid. AC power is delivered to EVs through Level 1 and Level 2 charging equipment.

Behind-the-Meter:

Equipment and infrastructure located on the customer's side of the utility meter.

Battery Electric Vehicle (BEV):

A vehicle powered entirely by an electric motor and battery, with no internal combustion engine.

CHAdeMO Connector:

A DC fast-charging connector standard used by some vehicles, originally developed in Japan.

Charge Port:

The physical inlet on a vehicle where the charging connector is plugged in.

Charging-as-a-Service:

A business model in which a third party installs, owns, and maintains charging equipment, while the fleet pays for energy or service through a subscription or usage fee.

Charging Infrastructure:

The electrical equipment and site components that support EV charging, including utility upgrades, wiring, and make-ready work.

Charging Rate:

The speed at which electricity is delivered to a vehicle, typically measured in kilowatts (kW).

Charging Station:

A device that delivers electricity to an EV through a connector. Often used interchangeably with EVSE.

Charging Plaza:

A location with multiple charging stations at a single site.

Connector:

The plug that physically connects the charging station to the vehicle.

Demand Charges:

Utility fees based on a customer's highest level of power usage (kW) during a billing period.

Demand Response:

A utility program that reduces or shifts electricity use during periods of high grid demand.

Direct Current (DC):

Electricity used by EV batteries. DC power is delivered directly to the vehicle during DC fast charging.

Duty Cycle:

The typical operating pattern of a vehicle, including daily mileage, dwell time, and charging windows.

Electric Vehicle (EV):

A vehicle that uses electricity for propulsion, including battery electric and plug-in hybrid vehicles.

Electric Vehicle Service Provider (EVSP):

An entity that manages charging services, including billing, network access, and customer support.

Electric Vehicle Supply Equipment (EVSE):

The equipment that connects an EV to an electricity source for charging. Commonly called a charging station.

EVSE Network:

A system that manages multiple charging stations, including access control, payment processing, and data reporting.

Fleet Charging:

Charging infrastructure used primarily by a business to support its own vehicles.

Home Charging:

Charging that occurs at residential locations, including single-family homes and multi-unit dwellings.

In-Front-of-the-Meter:

Utility-owned electrical infrastructure located upstream of the customer meter.

Inverter:

A device that converts AC electricity to DC (or vice versa) for use by an EV battery or the grid.

Kilowatt (kW):

A unit of power that measures the rate at which electricity is delivered.

Kilowatt-hour (kWh):

A unit of energy that measures the amount of electricity consumed or delivered over time.

Level 1 Charging:

AC charging using a standard 120-volt outlet, typically adding 2-5 miles of range per hour.

Level 2 Charging:

AC charging using 208-240 volts, typically adding 10-20 miles of range per hour.

Load:

The amount of electricity consumed by a customer, device, or facility.

Managed Charging:

A strategy that controls when and how EVs charge to reduce costs or support grid reliability.

Megawatt (MW):

A unit of power equal to 1,000 kilowatts.

Off-Peak:

Periods of lower electricity demand, often associated with lower energy costs.

On-Peak:

Periods of higher electricity demand, often associated with higher energy costs.

Plug-and-Charge:

A feature that allows an EV to begin charging automatically when plugged in, without user authentication.

Plug-in Hybrid Electric Vehicle (PHEV):

A vehicle that combines an electric motor and battery with an internal combustion engine and can be recharged from an external power source.

Public Charging:

Charging stations available for use by the general public or members.

Right-Sizing:

An analysis used to determine the appropriate number, type, and power level of charging stations for a fleet.

SAE Combined Charging System (CCS):

A charging connector standard that supports both AC and DC fast charging.

Site Host:

The owner or tenant responsible for the property where charging stations are installed.

Time-of-Use (TOU) Rates:

Electricity pricing that varies based on the time of day energy is consumed.

Total Cost of Ownership (TCO):

A method for evaluating the full cost of owning and operating a vehicle over its lifetime.

Utility Service Connection Request:

A formal application submitted to a utility to connect new electrical load to the grid.

Vehicle-to-Grid (V2G):

Technology that allows energy to flow from an EV battery back to a building or the electric grid.

Vehicles-as-a-Service:

A model that provides access to vehicles through a subscription rather than ownership.

