



GUIDE TO  
ELECTRIC VEHICLE  
ETIQUETTE



VAUXHALL



OUR UK ROADS are currently being transformed by the electric vehicle revolution and it is imperative that, as with any big transition, behaviour and etiquette can accommodate these changes. Drivers are uncertain about how to behave: in a recent survey Vauxhall found that 70% of drivers felt that there was a lack of guidance about how to use public EV chargers and 77% of drivers reported that they were unclear about the etiquette relating to owning an EV. Our new guide aims to address these uncertainties, providing clear guidance on charging protocols, as well as some recommendations about good etiquette that will contribute to a civilised and agreeable EV experience.

## CONTENTS

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### **RESPECT THE QUEUE**

04

Forming an orderly queue, and making sure you're neatly parked in designated bays, is a fundamental requirement when charging your EV. Friendly small talk with fellow EV drivers will make queue negotiations much more civilised.

### **KNOWLEDGE IS POWER**

05

Get to know your EV and trust your dashboard information. You can rapidly achieve the magic figure of 80% charge, which is an effective way of getting back on the road as quickly as possible and clearing the charging station for other motorists.

### **DIPLOMATIC NEGOTIATIONS**

06

How to navigate the queue, accommodate other motorists, and politely confer with other drivers about gaining access to the charging point.

### **KNOW YOUR RIGHTS**

07

Rules and regulations about using EV charging bays and how long you should park in them should be respected assiduously. EV bays are self-policed, so individual motorists should comply with the rules and be gracious and cooperative when their transgressions are pointed out.

### **GOOD TIMEKEEPING**

08

It is important to monitor your vehicle's projected charging time and to ensure that you return to the public charging point promptly, so you do not inconvenience other motorists. Placing a timing card in your windshield is a convenient way of notifying other drivers about the duration of your stay.

### **PRIORITISE PLANNING**

09

You will get the most out of your EV and minimise delays and frustration if you plan ahead and ensure that your route is well supplied with charging stations. Targeted apps will help you find charging bays and assess their availability.

### **BE STREETWISE**

10

Check out the availability of public facilities, such as lamppost and bollard charging points. If you are running a cable to your home, you will need to check local rules and regulations and ensure that you are not creating a trip hazard for pedestrians.

### **BE A GOOD EV GUEST**

11

If you need to charge your EV at a host's house, remember to ask politely, follow their instructions carefully, and charge your vehicle when electricity is cheapest. It is a good idea to explore the range of local charging options before your visit so that you always have alternatives.

### **HELP FELLOW EV DRIVERS**

12

Always leave the charging station looking neat and tidy. If you have encountered problems, report them to the charge point operator, or share information in one of the EV apps, which will alert your fellow EV drivers. Leaving a note on a defective charger is also helpful to other motorists.

## RESPECT THE QUEUE

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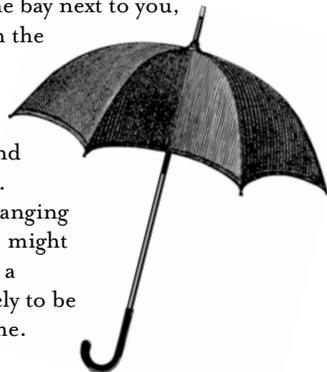
WHEN LOOKING FOR A PLACE to charge your electric car, you will often find that there are plenty of vacant bays available to use. However, at busier times and charging stations, forming an orderly queue will be a fundamental requirement when charging your electric vehicle. That means being observant about the layout of the charging station and remembering that each facility is different and will have its own rules. If in doubt about queuing protocol, politely ask a fellow motorist “excuse me, is this the end of the queue?”.

Make sure that you park neatly in the designated bays and that your vehicle fits snugly into the marker lines. Space invading – parking carelessly and straddling the lines – might mean that another vehicle is unable to find a suitable slot. Remember, no electric vehicle has special priority, whether that be a full EV or Plug-in Hybrid (PHEV).

Research by Vauxhall reveals that 40% of EV/hybrid drivers found their vehicle too big to fit into dedicated charging bays, and electric van drivers may well find that there is not enough room to accommodate their vehicles in the bay. If you are a van driver or own a large vehicle, park as neatly as possible and stay by your vehicle to ensure that you can move it if you are blocking other cars.

If you are a car driver and a large vehicle is moving into the bay next to you, do your best to move your car over as far as possible within the bay, giving the driver extra room.

When you must wait to charge your vehicle, pass the time of day with some friendly small talk. Exchange greetings and politely ask fellow motorists how long they think they'll be. EV queue small talk (e.g. chatting about the weather, exchanging notes on your vehicles, availability of charging points etc.) might make the whole experience more pleasant. If you establish a relationship with fellow motorists, they're much more likely to be accommodating when it comes to negotiating charging time.



## KNOWLEDGE IS POWER

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GET TO KNOW YOUR EV and trust the dashboard information. Much as you would like to boost your car to a 100% charge at every opportunity, it is not necessary – cars will charge much faster up to 80% and you will be able to clear the charging point for other motorists and complete your journey without hitting full charge. Public rapid chargers will allow you to achieve 80% capacity very quickly, in as little as 30 minutes for some vehicles. You will need to be aware that charging times will vary with different types of chargers and vehicles, so always take the time to check at the charging bay and determine how long it will take.

Unsurprisingly, public rapid chargers are popular with EV motorists, so it is important to ensure that you do not plug in for longer than necessary. At peak times other drivers will inevitably be waiting to charge their vehicles before continuing with their journeys.

If you're a Plug-in Hybrid driver, it is only polite to be aware that fully electric vehicle drivers are more dependent on charging stations than you are. You are, of course, fully entitled to use the charging station, but try to do so with extra attentiveness and, if you possibly can, let EV drivers use the charger first.



Many of Vauxhall's electric vehicles, including the Mokka Electric, Astra Electric and Vivaro Electric van can achieve up to 80% charge in just 30 minutes with a rapid charger.

*"The first thing to decide before you walk into any negotiation is what to do if the other fellow says 'no'."*

Ernest Bevin

## DIPLOMATIC NEGOTIATIONS

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**T**RY AND WAIT PATIENTLY and don't pace around looking at your watch and transmitting waves of passive aggression towards the motorist who is charging their vehicle. Never jump the queue; however, you can discreetly check the charging point to see how long a car still has left to fully charge and you may be able to politely negotiate with another driver using the bay.

If you notice that a motorist is occupying a charger and their vehicle is almost fully charged, you could politely open negotiations by asking if they'd be willing to make way for other motorists. Say something like "I hope you don't mind me asking, but I notice you're nearly fully charged. Would it be okay if I started to plug in soon?" If they agree to move on, heartfelt thanks are in order – no muttering "about time too!"

Encouragingly, Vauxhall found that 55% of EV drivers said they would let another driver go ahead of them at a public charge point if they needed less charge than them. So, accept that it works both ways and if you arrive at a charge point and you need a full charge, check out the other motorists. Ask them how much time they need, and if you can accommodate them, let people who only need a short charge go ahead of you. It's the same principle as supermarket shopping: if you arrive in the queue with an overladen trolley, and someone is behind you carrying a basket with a handful of items, it is considerate to let them go first if possible.



*"It is easy to dodge our responsibilities, but we cannot dodge the consequences of dodging our responsibilities."*

Sir Josiah Stamp

## KNOW YOUR RIGHTS

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Refer to any street signs and check the rules and regulations of the location when you're using public chargers. Remember, different councils will have their own rules, so never make assumptions based on previous experience. Rules will stipulate who can use EV bays and how long they can park in them; some councils will charge vehicles for overstaying their time in EV bays, so it's wise to understand your rights.

If a car is fully charged but the owner is not at the vehicle, there is very little you can do about it. If a non-EV car is parked in a charging bay, check that it's not a Plug-in Hybrid Vehicle, which also has a right to use an electric charging station. Non-EV cars that are parked in EV pavement charging bays may well be frowned upon, and some councils might even hand out fines, but in practice there is very little you can do when confronted by a selfish motorist, unless you catch them in the act of parking, when you can politely point out the sign. The same applies to an electric vehicle parked in an EV bay but not using it to charge – remember, it's a charging bay, not a VIP EV Bay!

Remember, your EV gives you certain rights and responsibilities; you should be assiduous about respecting them. If you mistakenly park in the parent/child bay at the supermarket, you accept that car park staff have a right to ask you to move on. EV bays are no different, but are often self-policed, which means that individual motorists need to comply with the rules and be gracious and cooperative when their transgressions are pointed out.

*“When people are waiting, they are bad judges of time, and every half minute seems like five.”*

Jane Austen, Mansfield Park

## GOOD TIMEKEEPING

IT IS VERY IMPORTANT TO NOTE how long it will take you to reach your desired charge level and ensure that you are back at your vehicle as, or shortly after, charging is complete, so you are not inconveniencing fellow motorists when using public charge points. This might mean returning to your car to move it away from the charging bay earlier than planned. Considerate EV motorists will do their utmost to ensure that they are not monopolising public charging points with fully charged vehicles.



If you arrive at a charging point which is occupied by a fully charged car, do not allow yourself to become enraged and attempt to unplug the charger from the offending car. A careless move could harm the car or the charger, and you don't want your understandable irritation to lead to you inflicting criminal damage.

It is helpful to keep other motorists informed by putting a timing card, or handwritten note, in your windshield when you are away from your charging vehicle. You will be able to notify other drivers how long you will be occupying the timing bay; ensure that you return to the vehicle at the time you specified.



Vauxhall has created timing cards for drivers to put in their vehicles when they are away from a charging car.

*“Those who plan do better than those who do not plan, even should they rarely stick to their plan.”*

Winston Churchill

## PRIORITISE PLANNING

Vauxhall found that 57% of EV drivers think there is an inadequate amount of dedicated signage on UK roads that will help them find suitable charging points/bays. Nevertheless, there are a growing number of facilities for EV drivers, and it is essential that you acquaint yourself with the available public signage, which will help enhance your EV experience and minimise frustration. There are also plenty of apps, such as Zapmap, which will map your EV universe, helping you find EV charging bays; they'll also let you know if they're busy or out of order.

You will get the most out of your EV and minimise delays and frustration if you plan ahead and ensure that your route is well supplied with charging stations. Most apps will also plug you into a community feature, which will put you in touch with other EV drivers nearby and alert you to any problems with specific charging stations. Route-planners will accommodate your charging requirements and may incorporate accurate predictions on your vehicle's range.

All these features enable you to manage your EV effectively, both for local and long journeys. If you make use of available technology, you will streamline the EV experience and minimise any potential frustration or impatience – you owe it to your fellow motorists to equip yourself with information and ensure that you remain accommodating at all times.

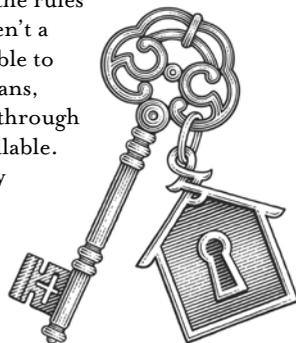
## BE STREETWISE

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APPROXIMATELY ONE-THIRD of UK homes do not have access to adjacent off-street parking, and this means that EV owners will need to be considerate and strategic about on-street charging.

The best option is to find an alternative method of charging the vehicle which does not pose a risk to the public. Some local areas have public charging facilities more readily available than others, and you might find charging ports built into streetlamps or bollards near you.

Alternatively, you might be more reliant on finding your own means of charging, such as running a cable from your house to your car over the pavement. It is important to check your local council rules and regulations if you are following this method; whilst it is not illegal, the rules vary depending on where you live. Ensuring cables aren't a trip hazard is essential, so only do this when you are able to cover or hide the cable so it is less of a risk to pedestrians, such as encasing it in raised plastic or running cables through in-ground channels, which some streets may have available. If required, you can get a channel installed specifically outside your home, so it is a good idea to explore your options.



Vauxhall partner JustPark allows drivers to find houses near them with private charging facilities available to rent out to top their car up.

*"Courtesy is a small act but it packs a mighty wallop."*

Lewis Carroll

## BE A GOOD EV GUEST

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IF YOU'RE VISITING A FRIEND or relative, or maybe staying overnight at their house, and desperate to charge your EV, don't assume that you can just march in brandishing your cable and demanding to know the whereabouts of the nearest power socket. Ask your host politely if they would mind you using their socket to charge your vehicle and meticulously follow their requests and instructions about where to park (you wouldn't want to antagonise their neighbours). You must find an arrangement that works for your host, and if you sense any reluctance, don't push your demands; seek an alternative method.

Remember, charging tariffs change depending on the time of day; electricity is often cheapest at night, when demand is lowest, so if you're an overnight guest defer charging your car until the evening. Unless they drive an EV, it is quite likely that your host will not have a home charger, so you will have to rely on using a standard three-pin plug cable, which will be slower and offer more of a 'trickle charge' than wallbox power. You will need to factor this into your charging calculations. If you feel you've been guzzling your hosts' electricity, it is a gracious gesture to leave a parting gift.

If it is difficult to charge your EV when you're visiting friends, there are other services available, such as renting charging facilities from private residents nearby, through companies such as Vauxhall partner JustPark. Your host might also be more familiar with local charging facilities, such as streetlamp charge ports nearby. Research before your visit to ensure you always have alternatives.

*“A little consideration, a little thought for others, makes all the difference.”*

A. A. Milne

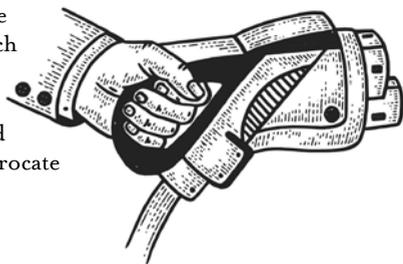
## HELP FELLOW EV DRIVERS

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IT IS ALWAYS COURTEOUS to leave the charging station looking neat and tidy, whether you are charging at home or using public facilities, so make sure the cable is put back as you found it and ready for the next person to use.

If you have encountered a problem with a public charger, take the time to report it to the charge point operator so they can fix it for other drivers. Sharing information about out-of-use or faulty chargers is a good way to support the EV community – facilities such as Zapmap allow you to update their information to flag any issues, and there are plenty of community groups who will benefit from knowing which public charge points are out of use.

You could also leave a note on the charger before you leave, alerting motorists that it is faulty, which will save them the trouble of manoeuvring their cars into a bay next to a redundant charger. You will be saving your fellow motorists time and trouble, and it is to be hoped that they will reciprocate if the need arises.





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