

EV charging and smart tariffs

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Electric vehicles are becoming an increasingly normal part of the households we serve. Customers with EVs often have specific questions about charging costs, tariff options, and how to make the most of cheaper overnight electricity. This guide gives you what you need to handle those conversations well.

How EV charging affects energy consumption

Charging an electric vehicle at home adds meaningfully to a household's electricity consumption. A typical EV might use anywhere from 15 to 70 kWh to charge from empty to full, depending on the battery size. For context, that's roughly equivalent to several days of average household electricity use for a single charge.

Customers who've recently bought an EV and are calling about a higher-than-expected bill often haven't fully accounted for this increase. A clear, non-judgmental explanation – *"EV charging does add significantly to electricity use, especially if you're charging frequently"* – usually resolves the confusion quickly.

Smart tariffs and time-of-use pricing

The best way for most EV owners to manage charging costs is through a time-of-use tariff – a tariff where the unit rate varies depending on the time of day. Electricity is significantly cheaper during off-peak periods, typically overnight, which is when most EV owners prefer to charge anyway.

Good Egg Energy offers time-of-use tariff options designed with EV owners in mind. Key things to know:

- Off-peak rates are considerably lower than standard rates – customers who charge overnight can make substantial savings compared to charging during the day
- A smart meter is required to take advantage of time-of-use tariffs, as the meter needs to record consumption by time period
- Peak rates on time-of-use tariffs can be higher than standard rates – customers need to be aware of this and manage their usage accordingly
- Smart home chargers can be programmed to charge automatically during off-peak hours, making the tariff essentially hands-off once set up

If a customer with an EV is on a standard tariff, it's worth mentioning that a time-of-use tariff could save them money. Don't push – just make sure they know the option exists.

Home EV charger set-up questions

Customers sometimes call with questions about getting a home charger installed. This is outside our direct remit – we don't install chargers – but a few useful things to know:

- Home chargers (sometimes called wallboxes) are typically installed by specialist EV charger installers, not energy suppliers
- A standard three-pin plug can be used to charge an EV in an emergency, but it's slow and not recommended for regular use
- A dedicated home charger installation usually requires a consumer unit check by an electrician – if a customer is worried about their electrical setup, suggest they consult a qualified electrician before installation
- Some energy suppliers and charger manufacturers have partnerships that offer installation deals – check whether Good Egg Energy has any current offers in Kraken or the internal communications hub

Common customer questions

"My direct debit has gone up since I got my EV – is that right?"

Almost certainly yes, if they're charging at home regularly. Walk them through the consumption increase and, if they're not already on one, mention time-of-use tariff options that could offset the increase.

"What's the cheapest time to charge my car?"

On a time-of-use tariff, overnight off-peak hours offer the lowest rate. On a standard tariff, the rate is the same throughout the day – which is another good moment to mention the tariff options available.

"Can I charge my EV on solar power?"

Yes – customers with both solar panels and an EV can charge directly from their solar generation during the day, which is effectively free electricity. Smart chargers can be configured to prioritise solar charging when generation is available. This is a great combination for customers who work from home or can charge during daylight hours.

"Will charging my EV damage my home's electrical system?"

A properly installed dedicated EV charger won't cause problems. Using a standard three-pin plug for extended charging sessions is less ideal and can put strain on older wiring. For any concerns about the home's electrical setup, recommend a qualified electrician – this isn't something we can advise on directly.

Watch out for this: Customers on time-of-use tariffs occasionally call in a panic because their bill looks higher than expected. Before investigating, check when they've been charging. If they've been charging during peak hours – perhaps because their scheduled charging was accidentally cancelled – the higher rate is the explanation. It's a simple fix once identified, but it can look alarming on the bill without context.