# Safely transitioning **to an EV fleet**

Adding EVs to your fleet can have some great benefits for your business and for the environment. If you're considering the change, here are some tips and practical steps from NZI's Risk Consulting team to help ensure the transition goes smoothly and safely.

## Preliminary assessment:

Before making any decisions about your EV fleet it pays to understand some details on how the fleet needs to operate.

### Look at your existing business travel

Drill down into the data you have available around how vehicles are used, how far they travel, how frequently they are on the road, etc. This will help inform your decision around the type of vehicle required.

### Consider your options

EVs provide the best carbon reductions, however a hybrid vehicle could be a better option if long distance, towing, or off-road travel is regularly required.

### How will drivers charge the vehicles?

Drivers may charge vehicles at home, at the business premises or publicly. If charging at home or at the business premises there are a few other considerations.

## Charging at the business premises:

If employees will be charging EVs at your business premises, run through the below list to help ensure your business is ready.

### Charging should be carried out in a designated space

EVs should have a clear, defined space to charge which allows for an appropriate clearance from any flammable materials. The space needs to have adequate ventilation and light and NZI recommends erecting safety signage alerting staff and visitors to the area being designated for EV charging only.

### Fire control and containment needs to be considered

Although rare, EV fires can be difficult to control. A fire blanket and extinguisher should be kept nearby for use by emergency services if required. NZI also recommends installing a sprinkler system where possible to help contain a fire.

### Most EV fires occur when charging or after an accident

Can the charge be completed during the day while staff are present and might detect an issue before it escalates? Employees should be trained in what to look out for e.g., over-heating cables, smoke, etc.

### Ensure you have the right electrical infrastructure

Charging a fleet of EVs can create a significant extra load on your business's electrical infrastructure. Have a registered electrician check the site's wiring to ensure it has the required capacity.

### Set up the right charging facilities

There are a range of charging options on the market. Talk to your electrician around which mode is best suited to your business's needs and make sure it is designed for your vehicle and for use in New Zealand. Installation needs to be completed by a registered electrician. NZI recommends Periodic Verification testing be conducted by a registered electrician at installation and every four years thereafter or in line with NZ safety standards regulations.

## Safe charging at home:

For drivers who need to charge their vehicle at home, it is possible with a dedicated and approved charging facility, but there are a few more requirements to ensure it is done safely and in compliance with WorkSafe's rules.

### Garage charging

WorkSafe specify that employer owned vehicles should be charged in a garage. Ensure your employee is comfortable and aware of the risks this arrangement may pose and that they have ample room for the vehicle and charging station.

### Undertake a site assessment

Wiring in older homes may not have the capacity to handle the extra load from charging an EV. Work with the driver to have a site assessment undertaken by a registered electrician, checking the wiring and ensuring safe charging practices can be undertaken.

### Install an approved charging facility

Drivers charging from home should have a dedicated and approved charging facility set up and installed in their garage by a qualified professional. It needs to be specifically designed for the vehicle and for use within New Zealand without any modifications.

### Train drivers on how to correctly charge the vehicle

Drivers need to understand how to charge the vehicle correctly. Incorrect charging procedures or using the wrong equipment, such as extension leads, multi-box adaptors, or damaged equipment could result in a fire.

### Get a maintenance plan in place

The business could be held liable in the event of fire or injury if appropriate care hasn't been taken. Ensure a regular maintenance and audit plan is in place to ensure cabling remains safe for use.

### Agree on a reimbursement scheme

Charging the vehicle will produce additional cost to your driver's electricity bill. Make sure an agreement is in place setting out the terms and conditions and who is responsible for the cost. For charging on the road consider joining an EV charging network for drivers to easily charge costs back to the business.

WorkSafe has produced comprehensive charging safety guidelines which are **available here**.

For more information get in touch with NZI's Risk Consulting team by emailing **Risk.Consulting@nzi.co.nz** or speak to your insurance broker.

**nzi.co.nz**

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