

**U.S. Department of Energy - Energy Efficiency and Renewable Energy
Alternative Fuels and Advanced Vehicles Data Center**



Washington Electric Laws and Incentives

State Incentives

Alternative Fuel Vehicle (AFV) and Hybrid Electric Vehicle (HEV) Tax Exemption

New passenger cars, light-duty trucks, and medium-duty passenger vehicles that are dedicated AFVs are exempt from the state sales tax. Qualified vehicles must operate exclusively on natural gas, propane, hydrogen, or electricity, meet the California motor vehicle emissions standards effective January 1, 2005, and comply with the rules of the Washington Department of Ecology. In addition, all new passenger cars, light-duty trucks, and medium-duty passenger vehicles that utilize hybrid electric technology and have a U.S. Environmental Protection Agency estimated highway fuel economy of at least 40 miles per gallon are exempt from the 0.30% motor vehicle sales tax. These tax exemptions expire on January 1, 2011. (Reference [House Bill](#) 6170, 2009, and [Revised Code of Washington](#) 82.08.020 and 82.08.809)

Electric Vehicle (EV) Battery and Infrastructure Tax Exemptions

Public lands used for installing, maintaining, and operating EV infrastructure are exempt from leasehold excise taxes until January 1, 2020. Additionally, the state sales and use taxes do not apply to EV batteries; labor and services for installing, repairing, altering, or improving EV batteries and EV infrastructure; and the sale of property on land used for EV infrastructure. (Reference [House Bill](#) 1481, 2009, and [Revised Code of Washington](#) 82.29A, 82.08, and 82.12)

Alternative Fuel Loans and Grants

The Energy Freedom Program (Program) is administered by the Washington Department of Commerce in consultation with other state agencies. The Program includes the Energy Freedom Account, which provides financial and technical assistance for bioenergy production, research, and market development, primarily in the form of loans used to convert farm products, organic wastes, cellulose and biogas into electricity, biofuel, and related coproducts. The Program also includes the Green Energy Incentive Account, which provides financial assistance for alternative fueling infrastructure along Interstate corridors. Funds have yet to be appropriated for these accounts, which are set to expire June 30, 2016. (Reference [House Bill](#) 2289, 2009, and [Revised Code of Washington](#) 43.325)

Electric and Plug-In Hybrid Electric Vehicle Demonstration Grants

The Vehicle Electrification Demonstration Grant Program is administered by the Washington Department of Community, Trade, and Economic Development. Eligible applicants are state agencies, public school districts, public utility districts, or political subdivisions of the state. Grants may be awarded to projects involving the purchase or conversion of existing vehicles to plug-in hybrid electric vehicles or battery electric vehicles for use in an applicant's fleet or operations; additional eligibility requirements apply. (Reference [Revised Code of Washington](#) 43.325.110)

Alternative Fuel Vehicle (AFV) and Hybrid Electric Vehicle (HEV) Emission Inspection Exemption

Electric, compressed natural gas, and liquefied petroleum gas vehicles are exempt from emission control inspections. HEVs that obtain a U.S. Environmental Protection Agency fuel economy rating of at least 50 miles per gallon of gasoline during city driving are also exempt from these inspections. (Reference [Revised Code of Washington](#) 46.16.015)

State Laws and Regulations

Electric Vehicle (EV) Infrastructure Development

In an effort to foster economic growth and reduce emissions, the Washington Legislature encourages EV use and the development of EV infrastructure. Any regional transportation planning organization containing a county with a population greater than one million must collaborate with state and local governments to promote EV use, invest in EV infrastructure, and seek federal or private funding for these efforts. Collaborative planning efforts may include: 1) developing short-term and long-term plans outlining how state, regional, and local governments may construct EV charging locations and ensure that the infrastructure can be electrically supported; 2) supporting public education and training programs on EVs; 3) developing an implementation plan for counties with a population greater than 500,000 to have 10% of public and private parking spaces ready for EV charging by December 31, 2018; and 4) developing model ordinances and guidance for local governments for site assessment and installing EV infrastructure. (Reference [House Bill](#) 1481, 2009)

Electric Vehicle (EV) Charging Infrastructure Availability

Recognizing that it is in the State of Washington's interest and to the benefit of the public to encourage the use of EVs to reduce emissions and improve air quality, publicly and privately owned EVs may be charged at state office locations where the vehicles are used for state business, commuter vehicles, or conducting business with the state. Additionally, contingent upon funding, the state must install electrical outlets suitable for charging EVs in each of the state's fleet parking and maintenance facilities as well as every state-operated highway rest stop by December 31, 2015. (Reference [House Bill](#) 1481, 2009, and [Revised Code of Washington](#) 43.01.250, 43.19.648, and 47.38)

Local Government Electric Vehicle (EV) Charging Infrastructure Requirements

A jurisdiction meeting specific location criteria (as defined in [Revised Code of Washington](#) 35.63) must develop regulations to allow the use of EV charging infrastructure in all areas except critical areas or areas zoned for residential or resource use. These regulations must be developed six months after the Washington Department of Community, Trade, and Economic Development distributes model ordinances, development regulations, and guidance for local governments for site assessment and installing EV infrastructure, or by July 1, 2010, whichever is later. This requirement is contingent upon federal funding. Additionally, cities or municipalities are authorized to adopt incentive programs to encourage retrofitting of existing structures capable of charging EVs. (Reference [House Bill](#) 1481, 2009, and [Revised Code of Washington](#) 35.63, 35A.63, 36.70, and 36.70A)

Electric Vehicle (EV) Charging and Battery Exchange Station Regulations

State and local governments are authorized to lease land for installing, maintaining, and operating EV charging stations or battery exchange stations for up to 50 years. Additionally, the installation of battery charging and exchange stations is categorically exempt from the Washington Environmental Policy Act. (Reference [House Bill](#) 1481, 2009, and [Revised Code of Washington](#) 79.13 and 43.21C)

Electric Vehicle (EV) Infrastructure Definitions

EV infrastructure is defined as structures, machinery, and equipment necessary and integral to support an EV, including battering charging stations, rapid charging stations, and battery exchange stations. A battery charging station is defined as an electrical component assembly or cluster of component assemblies designed specifically to charge batteries within an EV. A rapid charging station is defined as an industrial grade electrical outlet that allows for faster recharging of EV batteries through higher power levels. A battery exchange station is defined as a fully automated facility that will enable an EV with a swappable battery to enter a drive lane and exchange the depleted battery with a fully charged battery through a fully automated process. Infrastructure must meet or exceed any applicable state building standards, codes, and regulations. (Reference [House Bill](#) 1481, 2009, and [Revised Code of Washington](#) 19.28)

Alternative Fuels Corridor Pilot Project

Under the Alternative Fuels Corridor Pilot Project, the Washington Department of Transportation may enter into partnership agreements with other public and private entities to use land for alternative fuel corridor pilot projects. These agreements are subject to funding availability. (Reference [House Bill](#) 1481, 2009, and [Revised Code of Washington](#) 47.38)

State Agency Coordination to Address Climate Change

The Director of the Washington Department of Ecology must work with the Washington Departments of Commerce and Transportation to assess whether the California low-carbon fuel standard or other state standards would help Washington meet its greenhouse gas emission reduction target of 1990 levels by 2020. The Secretary of the Washington Department of Transportation must also work in consultation with the Washington Departments of Ecology and Commerce and other interest groups to address low or zero emission vehicles. Additionally, the Office of the Governor will work with state agencies to seek funding to implement a project for the electrification of the West Coast interstate highway and associated metropolitan centers and to purchase electric vehicles and install public fueling and/or charging infrastructure for electric and other high-efficiency, zero- or low-carbon vehicles. (Reference [Executive Order](#) 09-05, 2009)

Alternative Fuel Vehicle (AFV) Identification Requirement

Every automobile, truck, motorcycle, motor home, or off-road vehicle that is fueled by an alternative fuel must bear a reflective placard issued by the National Fire Protection Association indicating that the vehicle is powered by an alternative fuel. (Reference [Revised Code of Washington](#) 46.37.467)

Medium-Speed and Neighborhood Electric Vehicle (NEV) Access to Roadways

NEVs and medium-speed electric vehicles are defined as self-propelled, electrically powered four-wheeled motor vehicles that are permitted on roads having speed limits of up to 35 miles per hour (mph). NEVs can reach speeds greater than 20 mph but not more than 25 mph. Medium-speed electric vehicles can reach speeds greater than 30 mph but not more than 35 mph. NEVs and medium-speed electric vehicles must be in compliance with the national highway and traffic safety administration standards in Title 49 of the [Code of Federal Regulations](#), Part 571.500. (Reference [Revised Code of Washington](#) 46.04.295, 46.04.357 and 46.61.723 through 46.61.725)

Alternative Fuel Use Requirement

Effective June 1, 2015, all state and local government agencies are required to use 100% biofuels or electricity to operate all publicly owned vehicles. To phase in this requirement, all state agencies must achieve 40% biofuel or electricity use by June 1, 2013. To allow the motor vehicle fuel needs of state and local government to be satisfied by Washington-produced biofuels, the Department of General Administration and local governments may contract in advance and execute contracts with public or private producers and suppliers for the purchase of appropriate biofuels. (Reference [House Bill](#) 1481, 2009, and [Revised Code of Washington](#) 43.19.647 and 43.19.648)

Clean Fuel Vehicle Purchasing Requirement

At least 30% of all new vehicles purchased through a state contract must be clean fuel vehicles; this percentage will increase at the rate of 5% each year. It is preferred that dedicated clean fuel vehicles be purchased. In the event that dedicated clean fuel vehicles are not available or would not meet operation requirements, conventionally powered vehicles may be converted to operate on clean fuel or dual-fuel use. (Reference [Revised Code of Washington](#) 43.19.637)

Fleet Action Plan - Seattle

The Clean Green Fleet Action Plan ([PDF 444 KB](#)) aims to increase the use of alternative fuels, reduce fleet fuel use, reduce vehicle emissions, and improve the fuel efficiency of the City of

Seattle's (Seattle's) fleet. [Download Adobe Reader](#). Seattle's long-term intent is to continue participating in the Northwest Hybrid Medium and Heavy Duty Truck Consortium and to continue increasing the use of E85 fuel and electric vehicles. Seattle met its original goal to have a fleet that is 100% clean and green, through the use of clean fuels and vehicles that have the highest fuel efficiency and the lowest emissions and meet the needs of Seattle's operations. Seattle also met the specific measures called for in the plan, including a 5% reduction in the fleet's annual fuel use by 2005 as compared to 1999.

Utilities/Private Incentives

Clean and Efficient Fleet Assistance

The Puget Sound Clean Air Agency has launched the [Evergreen Fleets](#) program, a comprehensive greening plan and certification system for fleets. Evergreen Fleets provides fleet managers with tools to help "green" public and private fleets, reduce pollution, and save money. Evergreen Fleets provides a step-by-step guide to identify the most effective way for fleet managers to green their fleets, including buying greener vehicles, switching to greener fuels, or improving fleet efficiency.

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