

Interim Guidance for Electric and Hybrid-Electric Vehicles Equipped With High-Voltage Batteries (Vehicle Owner/General Public)

Electric and Hybrid-Electric Vehicle Considerations

In the event of damage, fire, or flooding involving an electric vehicle (EV) or hybrid-electric vehicle (HEV):

- Always assume the high-voltage (HV) battery and associated components are energized and fully charged.
- Exposed electrical components, wires, and HV batteries present potential HV shock hazards.
- Venting/off-gassing HV battery vapors are potentially toxic and flammable.
- Physical damage to the vehicle or HV battery may result in immediate or delayed release of toxic and/or flammable gases and fire.
- A HV battery in a flooded vehicle may have high voltage and short circuits that can shock and cause fires.

Vehicle Information and General Safety Practices

- Know the make and model of your vehicle.
- Review the owner's manual and become familiar with your vehicle's safety information and recommended safety practices.
- Do not attempt to repair damaged electric and hybrid-electric vehicles yourself. Contact an authorized service center or vehicle manufacturer representative for service.

Crashes

A crash or impact significant enough to require an emergency response for conventional vehicles would also require the same response for an electric or hybrid-electric vehicle.

If possible

- Move your car to a safe, nearby location and remain on the scene.
- Roll down windows before shutting vehicle off.
- Place vehicle in Park, set parking brake, turn off the vehicle, activate hazard lights, and move key(s) at least 16 feet away from the vehicle.

Always

- Call 911 if assistance is needed and advise that an electric or hybrid-electric vehicle is involved.
- Do not touch exposed electrical components or the engine compartment, as a shock hazard may exist.
- Avoid contact with leaking fluids and gases, and remain out of the way of oncoming traffic until emergency responders arrive.
- When emergency responders arrive, tell them that the vehicle involved is an EV or HEV.

Fires

As with any vehicle, call 911 immediately if you see sparks, smoke, or flames coming from the vehicle.

- Exit the vehicle immediately.
- Advise 911 that an electric or hybrid-electric vehicle is involved.
- As with any vehicle fire, do not inhale smoke, vapors, or gas from the vehicle, as they may be hazardous.
- Remain a safe distance upwind and uphill from the vehicle fire.
- Stay out of the roadway and stay out of the way of any oncoming traffic while awaiting the arrival of emergency responders.

Flooding

- Remain a safe distance away and do NOT attempt physical contact with the vehicle.
- Immediately call 911 and advise that an electric or hybrid-electric vehicle is involved

Post-Incident

- Do not store a severely damaged vehicle with a lithium-ion battery inside a structure or within 50 feet of any structure, vehicle, or combustible.
- Ensure that passenger and cargo compartments remain ventilated (i.e., open window, door, or trunk).
- Notify an authorized service center or vehicle manufacturer representative as soon as possible, as there may be other steps they can take to secure and discharge the HV battery.
- Call 911 if you observe leaking fluids, sparks, smoke, or flames, or hear gurgling or bubbling from the HV battery.

