

Electric Vehicle Charging Cord Guidance for Crossing the Sidewalk



I. Background

More and more Oakland residents drive or are interested in driving an electric vehicle (EV) but lack access to dedicated off-street parking for at-home charging. The City is working to increase charging access consistent with [Equitable Climate Action Plan \(ECAP\)](#) and [Zero Emission Vehicle \(ZEV\) Action Plan](#), in line with California's target of 100% zero-emission new passenger vehicle sales by 2035.

II. Purpose

This Guidance is designed to enable residents who lack dedicated and sufficient off-street parking to safely and conveniently charge their EV at home by extending a cord across the sidewalk/public right-of-way (PROW) to a parked vehicle, subject to the requirements below.

III. Applicability

This Guidance is applicable only to residents who:

- Occupy ground-floor homes and units with adjacent sidewalks AND
- Lack access to dedicated off-street parking AND
- Are located in single-family and multi-family residential zones with designations in the RD-, RH-, RM-, or RU- series. To identify your zone designation, view Oakland's zoning map [here](#).

****NOTE: Certain locations in Oakland cannot accommodate charging cords in the PROW, due to safety and accessibility issues. These locations include any blocks on streets with a grade/slope greater than 5% and any areas within 5 feet of broken or uneven pavement or other significant sidewalk obstructions. This Guidance is not applicable on these blocks.***

IV. Requirements

The following requirements apply to residents who seek to extend a cord across the sidewalk/PROW to charge an EV parked on the street and who meet the above applicability requirements. All charging cords must be covered by a highly visible, stable, and secure low-angle cord cover at all times while in use and placed in the PROW.

Use and Parking

- The EV charging cord and cord cover must cross perpendicular to the sidewalk to minimize obstacles to mobility.
- All cords, cord covers, and other equipment must be removed from public space when active EV charging is complete and in all cases within 24 hours of beginning a charge.
- Residents are not guaranteed a reserved parking space and may not use signage or other means to reserve a parking space.
- All local parking regulations and parking permit requirements, both temporary and permanent, remain unchanged and shall be followed.
- Residents may not place a cord cover less than 5 feet from another cord cover on the same sidewalk.
- Residents must securely affix to the cord and/or cover a label providing contact information (e.g., home address and/or telephone number) to allow for prompt identification and response in case of any issues with the equipment.

Technical

- Residents must connect charging equipment to an electrical receptacle (outlet) associated with their utility account.
- All equipment must be listed and installed per manufacturer's instructions.
- Level 1 (110-120V) and Level 2 (240V) charging equipment are permitted. For Level 2 (240V) charging equipment, residents must either use a charging cord that is hard-wired to a circuit (i.e., no removable plug) or connect the cord plug to an outlet that is inaccessible to the public, either in an enclosed interior space or in a locked outdoor cage or cabinet located on private property. All cords and equipment must be removed from the PROW when not in use regardless of type.
- Residents are responsible for complying with all relevant sections of the Oakland Buildings and Construction Code (Oakland Municipal Code Title 15) and National Electric Code (NEC). Per applicable NEC provisions, all flexible cables must be suitable for the conditions of use and location and suitably rated for equipment ampacity and power output, and the rating of any cord and plug connected utilization equipment not fastened in place shall not exceed 80% of the branch circuit ampere rating. Consult Oakland's [Planning and Building Department](#) for more information on applicable Buildings and Construction Code and NEC provisions.

Cord Covers

All cord covers:

- Shall be on sidewalks with a running grade of 5% or less (view your street slope [here](#) by clicking on your street to find the "Average slope").
- Shall be constructed of sturdy material and should not flex noticeably under a 200-pound point load.
- Shall be visible to low-vision pedestrians and at night, using a bright colored (preferably bright yellow) cable cover and reflective strips.

- Shall be covered with an ADA-compliant cord protector ramp.
 - This example of a compliant ramp is provided for illustration purposes only, and does not imply blanket approval or product/vendor endorsement, nor is it the only viable solution: [https://www.homedepot.com/p/SKYSHALO-45-in-x-31-5-in-Cable-Protector-Ramp-3-75-ft-22000-lbs-Load-Raceway-Cord-Cover-Conduit-ADA-Compliant-5-Channel-DLADA15WH1212LBRZV0-S1122/333692479?\)](https://www.homedepot.com/p/SKYSHALO-45-in-x-31-5-in-Cable-Protector-Ramp-3-75-ft-22000-lbs-Load-Raceway-Cord-Cover-Conduit-ADA-Compliant-5-Channel-DLADA15WH1212LBRZV0-S1122/333692479?)
- Shall be slip resistant when wet. If the material used does not possess a slip resistant property, apply a non-slip coating (available at a hardware or home improvement store), preferably bright yellow.
- Shall not have any protrusions, such as bolt heads or nails.
- Shall not feature gaps between the ramp and landing area exceeding 1/2-inch.
- Shall not feature a lip at the bottom of ramp (where it meets sidewalk) greater than 1/4-inch.
- Shall not be temporarily or permanently affixed to the sidewalk with hardware of any kind.
- Shall cover the width of the sidewalk.
- Shall maintain a perpendicular angle to the sidewalk to minimize obstacles to mobility.
- Shall maintain a landing area running grade and cross slope that are parallel to the sidewalk.
- All equipment (cords and cord covers) must be removed from the PROW when not actively charging, and in all cases within 24 hours of beginning a charge.

V. Enforcement, Liability, and Insurance

Residents who extend EV charging cords across the PROW are solely responsible for ensuring that the cord conforms with this Guidance at all times and assume liability for any and all claims or losses associated with their charging equipment. Failure to comply with this Guidance may result in the removal of equipment and the collection of expenses incurred to restore public space in a manner provided by the law pursuant to Oakland Municipal Code § 12.08.140. Residents who extend EV charging cords across the PROW in accordance with this Guidance should ensure that their homeowners/tenant liability insurance coverage captures this circumstance with a suggested limit of \$1 million.

Inquiries and enforcement regarding this guidance will be handled by OakDOT's Right-of-Way [ROW] Management Division. Concerns or complaints about private EV charging cord and their covers in the PROW can be addressed through the OakDOT permit counter. Please contact (510) 238-3199 or DOTOnlinePermits@oaklandca.gov.

VI. Uses Requiring a Permit

This Guidance applies only to the charging cord and sidewalk cord cover uses described above. Consistent with its [Zero Emission Vehicle Action Plan](#), the City is continuing to pursue strategies for permanent charging infrastructure in public spaces. For any proposed EV charging installation in the sidewalk or PROW other than the uses described above, including installations requiring trenching, excavation, permanent PROW encroachment and hardware installation, and new utility interconnections, residents must obtain all necessary permits. Please consult the [Planning and Building Department's Online Permit Center](#) and [OakDOT's Engineering Services webpage](#) for more information on permit requirements and processes.