Rev Up Electric Vehicles 2.0 FAQ

What is Rev Up Electric Vehicles?
Rev Up is a nationwide campaign to evaluate the EV consumer shopping experience in the U.S. and to use the survey results to push the auto industry to do a better job with their EV inventory, marketing, and sales. This is an interactive campaign where community members visit their car dealerships, test drive electric vehicles, and let us know how their shopping experience went.

First, some background:
More than 1 million people in the U.S. have bought or leased electric vehicles (EVs) and are loving their cars. EVs are fast, fun to drive, technologically advanced, and produce much lower emissions than conventional vehicles (yes, even factoring in the pollution from electricity sources). However, we regularly hear that people have a tough time shopping for EVs—no EVs were available at the dealership or the salespeople were uninformed or no one shared information with them about important incentives like rebates or tax credits.

In 2016, Sierra Club launched Rev Up EVs to evaluate the consumer EV shopping experience in the 10 states where the auto industry was pushing regulators to weaken the zero emission vehicle standards. Sierra Club used the data from our report to show regulators that there was much more the auto industry could do to strengthen the EV consumer shopping experience, and that the standards shouldn’t be weakened, but rather the industry should do better to meet those standards. It worked. Regulators kept the standards strong.

But the auto industry—which often claims to care about sustainability—continues to fall short in providing consumers with the EV shopping experience they deserve. Now, in 2019, we’re expanding Rev Up to all 50 states. Our goal with Rev Up Electric Vehicles 2.0 is to show that most automakers and dealers (though with some notable exceptions!) still have a long way to go in selling EVs, and to push the industry to do better for consumers and for the planet.

Anything I should keep an eye out for while I’m at the car dealership?
We want your experience to be as natural as possible, but do keep a mental note of some of the following during your visit:

• How many electric vehicles were at the dealership?
• Were electric vehicles showcased in prominent locations?
• How knowledgeable were the salespeople regarding incentives and rebates, charging infrastructure, savings, and energy benefits?
• Were the salespeople interested in talking to you about electric vehicles?
• If you test drove an electric vehicle, was it sufficiently charged?
• Did the salespeople provide all electric vehicle information up front or were they prompted by your questions?

How do I sign up?
Sign up and RSVP at www.sc.org/RevUp2019. After you do that, we recommend finding one of the following dealerships or stores near you to visit: Audi, BMW,
Cadillac, Fiat, Chevrolet/GM, Chrysler/Fiat, Ford, Honda, Hyundai, Jaguar, Kia, Mercedes, Mitsubishi, Nissan, Porsche, Smart, Tesla, Toyota, Volkswagen, and Volvo. If there are none of these specific dealerships or stores near you, finding general car dealerships will also work. Be sure to call ahead to check if they have electric vehicles onsite. If they do not, be sure to fill out a survey for each dealership or store. That helps us track which dealerships have inventory and which do not. You can also check out Sierra Club’s online EV guide.

What is an electric vehicle?
A fully electric vehicle uses electricity to power a battery. This means no gasoline, no dirty oil changes, and no internal combustion engine. Most new fully electric vehicles can drive 125-300+ miles on one charge (but somewhat less in very cold or very hot weather). Plug-in hybrid electric vehicles run on electricity for a certain number of miles, and as their battery runs out of charge, a gasoline powered engine or generator kicks in.

Using a 220-volt outlet and charging unit, installed by an electrician, or a regular 120-volt wall outlet, a plug-in hybrid or full electric vehicle recharges in several minutes or hours, depending on the model and how out of charge it is. DC fast chargers at some highway rest stops and other public locations can charge many EVs up to 80% in about 25 minutes. Most EVs are charged at home overnight or at work.

Why should we switch to electric vehicles?
EVs are fun to drive, cheaper to fuel, and good for our environment. There are dozens of full EVs and plug-in hybrids for sale in the U.S. at various price points. Each year, American passenger cars and trucks, through vehicle tailpipe and oil extraction and transport emissions, spew trillions of tons of carbon pollution into the air by burning billions of gallons of gasoline. Even when factoring in the emissions from the electricity needed to charge EVs, EVs are dramatically lower in emissions than conventional vehicles. As we shift to more renewable sources of electricity, EVs become even lower in emissions. In addition to worsening climate change, our dangerous dependence on oil has resulted in countless catastrophes like the BP spill in the Gulf of Mexico.

Why do you need us to visit car dealerships?
During Rev Up 1.0, our volunteers found huge discrepancies with how automakers and car dealerships were marketing their electric vehicles. For example, of the visits to dealerships with at least one EV on the lot, volunteers indicated that about 33% of the time the salesperson did not discuss the federal and state tax credits and rebates available to lower the cost of an EV; this information is vital for prospective car buyers to know, and it is up to dealerships to invest in the proper training and resources for their employees to be able to provide accurate and helpful information.

Should I look for new or used EVs?
Either one or both!

What do I do when I get there?
Be yourself! You won’t need a script. This is not a “secret shopper” assignment. We recommend finding someone to help you and start the conversation by letting them know you are interested in an electric vehicle. We want this to be an organic, free-flowing conversation between you and the salespeople. But if you want to think of any questions to ask before hand, by all means do!

When you finish your conversation, remember to ask for a test drive!

I’m done with my visit, what’s next?
We want to hear your story and see how your experience went. If you’re able to fill out more than one survey (by calling, checking out websites, or visiting multiple dealerships), that would be great! Also, sharing this opportunity with your friends and family would be terrific because a) maybe an EV is right for them; and b) the more people we get to fill out the surveys, the more data we have to share with the world. We also recommend taking good quality photos of your visit. If possible, take photos of electric vehicles or you looking at or driving an electric vehicle. Send all photo and video content to hieu.le@sierraclub.org

Lastly, do not forget to submit your survey responses here:
sc.org/RevUpSurvey