

## Jamaica electric vehicle safety

The long-awaited Electric Vehicle Mobility Policy is expected to be a reality by the end of this month, with a 10 per cent duty to be charged on the value of the imported vehicle being among the guidelines that will be in place.

“It now has to go to the CPC (Chief Parliamentary Counsel), which hopefully we will get that done in a matter of a few weeks but the Electric Vehicle Mobility Policy will be coming into effect by the end of this month,” Vaz declared.

His comments came during today's launch of the annual Road Safety Awareness Month hosted jointly by the Jamaica Gasolene Retailers Association and Future Energy Source Company (FESCO) Limited at the Fesco Service Station on Beechwood Avenue in St Andrew.

“Therefore, if you have the same duty on a more expensive vehicle, then you don't get the value for what you are trying to do, which is to stay with the moving technology [which is] to go to electric vehicles. So we will go to CPC, we will have a concessionary rate of 10 per cent and so as not to make Jamaica a dumping ground, we will put an age limit of three years,” Vaz said.

“So the bottom line is that nobody has to rush to say “oh, there is a quota.” Everybody can take their time and based on the affordability etcetera, you transition over time to what is happening.”

Electric vehicles, or EVs for short, have gained popularity among drivers worldwide, especially those seeking smoother driving experiences and wanting a cost-effective and eco-friendly form of transportation. Electric vehicles are powered exclusively by electricity instead of gasolene or diesel fuel. Instead of an internal combustion engine (ICE), it has a battery (hence, it is sometimes referred to as BEV), which holds the electric charge.

As battery-powered electric vehicles become more popular, concerns over their safety, motor efficiency, and durability have also caused an increase in the myths and misconceptions surrounding them. Here are some of the most common myths about EVs and the facts you need to make an informed decision about your choice of vehicle, according to project eDrive.

Compared to fueling an ICE vehicle, EV owners currently benefit from lower costs to charge. On average, a subcompact ICE SUV like the Kia Sonet will cost about \$10,000 in petrol from empty to full. On the other hand, a subcompact all-electric vehicle like the BMW iX1 can be charged to full capacity (100%) at a cost of approximately \$3,600. While EVs currently experience a lower-range capacity than ICE vehicles, the cost to charge from 0 - 100% when doubled is noticeably less than that of a comparable gas vehicle.

The rate at which an electric vehicle charges depends on the charger type, the size of the battery, and how much power is in the battery. The charging infrastructure has evolved, and currently, there are different types of chargers and three primary charging levels: Level 1, 2 and 3.

With a low-level or Level 1 charger, an EV can take from 30 minutes to eight hours to charge. Operating at an average of 3-7 kilowatts per hour (kWh), a Level 1 charger is the slowest of the three and is meant for residential use.

Level 2 chargers, however, have a power output of 7kWh to 22kWh and charge up to 15 times faster than a Level 1 charger. To put it into perspective, a typical electric car with a 60kWh battery takes under eight hours to charge from empty to full with a Level 2 charger. These chargers can be installed in a home or commercial space by a qualified professional.

Public outdoor charging stations are built to withstand the elements, and once correctly installed, at-home chargers are also safe. Regularly inspecting charger components, including cables and plugs, is crucial to prevent potential accidents, ranging from minor electrical shocks to serious electrocutions. Signs of excessive wear and tear are indicative of the need for a new charger. In the case of a public outdoor charging station, reporting such issues to the providers and seeking an alternative source is essential for safety.

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