

Tips and trends for homeowners, buyers and sellers

Prepping for an Electric Vehicle

The electric vehicle (EV) market is growing and becoming more popular among consumers. While a terrific way to save on fuel costs and help the environment, you must consider how you'll charge your new EV before you make the purchase.



Do I need to buy a charger?

The most common question consumers ask, the short answer is likely no. Almost all electric vehicles come with a Level 1 charger that plugs directly into a standard power outlet. The downside is that they charge a car's battery slowly.

J.D. Power reported that 54% of EV owners have installed Level 2 chargers to help combat this issue. Consumers using a Level 2 charger can reach a full charge overnight. Level 2 chargers need a different power source and plug, which must be installed by an electrician.

What if I park far away from a power source?

If you rely on street parking, you likely won't be able to accommodate owning an electric vehicle. Homeowners with detached garages with no power source will also find EV charging difficult. Most chargers come with a 25-foot cable, so make sure you've properly planned.

How much will it cost to install?

Installing an advanced EV charger can have varying costs, depending on location and complexity. Installation starts at \$500 and can end up costing \$1,500-\$3,000. If your home doesn't support the increased power output from the charger, costs can range up to \$8,000.

Refrigerator Sizing Guide

When choosing the right refrigerator, you must consider the size, type and if it will be the right fit and style for your home. Here is a guide to choosing the right style and size refrigerator.

Top freezer refrigerators

These are what you think of as "traditional" fridges, with the main compartment (refrigerator) taking up two-thirds of the space, while the freezer takes up one-third of the space at the top of the appliance. This style of refrigerator has wide shelves and is the most compact of all refrigerator types.

► Average size of top freezer refrigerators:

Width: 28¾"-32¾"
Height: 61¾"-66¼"



Side-by-side refrigerators

Side-by-side fridges have the main compartment and freezer next to each other. This layout places most shelves at eye-level, making it easier to find items quickly. However, while each compartment is slimmer than those found in other refrigerator models, the overall width of this refrigerator style is the widest among all styles.

► Average size of side-by-side refrigerators:

Width: 32¾"-39¾"
Height: 65⅞"-71¼"



Bottom freezer refrigerators

Instead of the fridge being on the bottom, this design switches the placement of the refrigerator and freezer. The main compartment takes up the top two-thirds and the freezer takes up the bottom third. This style is suitable for people who would rather have the main compartment at eye level and is usually more energy efficient.

► Average size of bottom freezer refrigerators:

Width: 29½"-32¾"
Height: 67"-70"



French door refrigerator

French door refrigerators offer the best of both worlds, with the main compartment consisting of side-by-side doors and a wide bottom freezer. This appliance is narrower than side-by-side refrigerators, but the shelves are wider since the fridge and freezer use the entire width.

► Average size of French door refrigerators:

Width: 29 ½"-36"
Height: 68 ½"-70 ⅞"


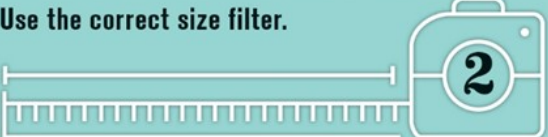




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What to Know About HVAC Filters

Many homeowners don't understand the importance of changing the air filter in their home. Not only do regular filter changes help improve your air quality, but it also helps keep your HVAC appliances running efficiently, saving you time and money in the future. For those who may be novices, here's some advice on how to make sure your filter changes go smoothly.



<p>Buy filters in bulk and keep them next to the furnace. 1</p> 	<p>Use the correct size filter. 2</p> 	<p>Install the filter in the right direction. 3</p> 	<p>Turn off the power at the circuit breaker. 4</p> 
<p>Having filters readily available next to the furnace will reduce the tendency to wait to replace the old filter. Bulk purchases are also typically more inexpensive than buying filters individually.</p>	<p>Not using the correct-sized filter lets dirt and debris escape around the filter, causing the air in your home to become contaminated. Most air filters will have the size printed on them, so check your existing filter to determine which size works for your system. If the size is not readily available, you can measure the air filter slot to determine the correct size. The air filter slot will likely measure slightly larger than the filter you will need to use.</p>	<p>Most filters have arrows that show the direction of airflow. Incorrectly installing a filter can cause the filter to work less efficiently, increasing the risk of contaminants in the air.</p>	<p>Consider turning off the power to your appliances before changing the filter. Do so at the breaker instead of the thermostat. This ensures your safety if you encounter any wiring inside or near the filter.</p>

While most HVAC filters keep larger pollutants out of the air, they will not keep the air free of smaller contaminants and other allergens. If your home has excessive dust, pet dander or smoke, consider using an additional air purifier. HEPA-rated filters in these appliances are designed to catch the smallest particles that can pass through the most common HVAC filters, creating safe and unpolluted air in your home.



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