

May 2, 2022

Five ways to test drive an EV before you buy one



Ford Mustang Mach-E 2021

4.97★ (41 trips)

~~\$195~~ \$187 total

[View price details](#)

Sample result from a search for electric vehicle rentals in B.C. on turo.com. (Image courtesy turo.com)

Surge in interest can make dealership test drives tough to find, but there are options

The good news about electric cars in B.C. is that, despite delays in shipments for some popular models, we're still leading the continent in EV sales. The bad news is that as you try to decide on a vehicle, it can be a challenge to get a test drive of specific vehicles you're interested in.

Computer chip and supply chain issues falling out of the COVID-19 pandemic and the war in Ukraine have hit supply chains for numerous products. And Blair Qualey, president and CEO of the New Car Dealers Association of B.C., says electric vehicles are no exception.

"If folks are looking for a test drive, they probably could still find something at a dealership, but they may not find exactly what they've been wanting with all of the features and special things that they might like, including colour," says Qualey. "But 2021 was still an all-time record for the uptake of [EV] rebates in B.C., so people are finding what they're looking for. We're just asking people to be patient."

Qualey suggests that anyone shopping for an EV should first go online to get up to speed on features and reviews and to help zero in on the model that works for them. "Once you have an idea of what you want, call your local dealer," he says. "They've got a tremendous network of other dealers and other sources of vehicles, both new and used."

Fortunately, there are other options as well. Surging sales of EVs in B.C. are paying off with a lot of cars on the road, and more options to drive a plug-in without actually owning one.

Here are five alternatives to test drives at dealerships if you want to get behind the wheel of an electric car in B.C.

1. Ask a friend or neighbour for a ride

EV owners tend to get enthusiastic about their experience in owning a plug-in, and many are big on spreading the word. Ask a friend or neighbour for a drive or ride-along in their vehicle. You may be surprised at the response, and you'll get insider info on what it's like to own and operate the vehicle.

2. Rent an EV

Standard car rental agencies such as [Hertz](#) are adding electric vehicles to their fleets in certain cities, and you may be able to book one for use during a vacation, or even in your home town.

[Turo](#) is a popular alternative to regular car rental agencies that lists a wide variety of vehicles – including battery electrics and hybrid plug-ins – available for rent by their owners. It's kind of like the VRBO or Airbnb of vehicles, and it has a strong presence in B.C. The easiest way to find electric vehicles on [turo.com](#) is to choose "electric vehicles" and/or "hybrids" as a search filter, along with the area in which you're looking to rent. A quick [turo.com](#) search in April found dozens of vehicles available across B.C., in places ranging from Victoria, Nanaimo, and Courtenay on Vancouver Island, to the Lower Mainland, Okanagan and Kootenays. Due to the cars' popularity, most rentals are Teslas, but models such as the Ford Mach-E and Nissan Leaf are in the mix.

3. Try a car share

If you live in Vancouver, you may have spotted boldly branded white Tesla Model 3s parked on city streets. They're part of the [ZeroCar](#) fleet that offers a car share service for hourly or daily use that requires pickup and dropoff at the same curbside locations. ZeroCar also has a more standard rental car service that rents Tesla 3, Y, S, and X models.

4. Try a used EV (and maybe buy one)

Used cars of all kinds have been in great demand over the past couple years, but you can still find quality EVs available in B.C., including a lot of older vehicles that may have had some battery degradation but still have plenty of range if you plan to use your EV mainly as a city commuter. The Government of BC also recently announced that it will no longer collect provincial sales tax (PST) on used battery-electric vehicle sales.

[Get more advice, and learn about the pros-and-cons of buying a used EV.](#)

5. Keep an eye out for EV shows and EV owner events

The [Vancouver International Auto Show](#), which plans to return in 2023, has numerous new EVs on display, and usually offers several cars for test drives. And EV organizations such as the [Vancouver Electric Vehicle Association](#) (VEVA) and [Emotive BC](#) may soon revive events where the public can test drive EVs.