



Driver Profile

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EV truck proves its power at City of Saskatoon Landfill

By Jeannie Armstrong

When it's time to replace the half-ton trucks in their fleet, City of Saskatoon employees Scott and Byron plan to recommend purchasing electric-powered vehicles.

Scott is a project engineer and Byron is an operations engineer with the City's Material Recovery Centre (MRC) and Landfill.

Located at 42 Valley Road, the Material Recovery Centre is the one-stop facility where Saskatoon residents can drop off recyclables including electronics, batteries, oil, metals, appliances, tires, oil and antifreeze.

"We are responsible for construction projects and engineering aspects at the Material Recovery Centre and Landfill."

Among the MRC's vehicle fleet of one-ton, three-quarter-ton and half-ton trucks is a 2023 Ford F-150 Lightning half-ton, used by site supervisors to travel within the landfill site. It also doubles as the go-to truck for picking up supplies or taking staff downtown to City Hall.

Both agree the EV is the perfect fit for short-distance, high-utility work. The Lightning's range — typically 220 to 280 kilometres — far exceeds daily requirements. *"I can't recall the last time I actually saw us have less than 200 kilometres of range. On a very busy day, we're putting on 50 kilometres at most,"* says Scott.

Byron adds, *"The odd time I've used it late in the day, the battery might be down to 30 per cent. As long as people remember to plug it in at the end of the day, it's never a problem."*



Supervisors spend a lot of time in the EV doing inspections of sites within the landfill. The vehicle becomes a 'mobile shelter', providing heat in winter and air-conditioning in the summer. The EV is particularly well-suited to this task, providing climate control without having to idle an engine and generate emissions.

TIME SAVER

One of the biggest advantages for MRC staff is the Lightning's plug-and-go convenience. Unlike fuelling up — which requires multiple fuel cards, codes and pump lineups — parking and plugging in the EV takes less than a minute each day.

A Level 2 charger is adjacent to the MRC administration building, making it easy to recharge the Lightning overnight.

"In the morning, I just have to unplug and go. I never have to worry about the fuel tank being empty."

Maintenance costs are also lower for the EV truck than its gas-powered counterparts. Dale, manager of Fleet Services with the City of Saskatoon, estimates that the cost of charging the F-150 Lightning is about 25 per cent of the cost of gasoline for the same amount of vehicle use. With 16,000 kilometres on the odometer, maintenance costs have been limited to tire repairs and annual inspections. An equivalent gasoline engine truck would have required three oil changes in the same period.

POWER ON THE GO

The Lightning's built-in generator, the 2.4 kW Pro Power Onboard system, has been another benefit. With multiple 120-V outlets, staff can power tools directly from the vehicle. *"We use it to power things like water pumps, fuel pumps and air compressors. It means we don't have to haul generators to remote parts of the landfill,"* says Scott.

"At the time of purchase, there was the option to upgrade to a 240-volt power package, which would have given us more versatility," says Byron. *"If we get another EV, I would suggest the higher power level, because it's not a huge upgrade cost."*

TERRAIN CHALLENGES

The landfill terrain is unforgiving: dirt, garbage, mud, snow and ice. The Lightning handles these off-

road conditions with ease, automatically switching to four-by-four mode, says Byron.

Upgrading to off-road-style tires which do not come standard on the Lightning have made a big difference, he adds. *"The factory tires that came on the truck just weren't suitable for our site."*

The Lightning's advanced camera systems and safety features also help drivers maneuver in tight areas and reduce risk.

The MRC staff keep the EV half-ton parked outside, year-round, with no qualms. *"The Lightning is more reliable than our other gas-powered trucks as far as winter goes,"* says Byron. *"The cold won't affect it, especially if it's plugged in. It's been very reliable."*

FLEET-WORTHY

With more than two years of use behind them, Scott and Byron agree that the EV truck has been a great fit for their operational needs. Its low maintenance, plug-and-go convenience, lower greenhouse gas emissions and versatility make it the ideal choice for MRC's vehicle pool.

"When it comes time to replace vehicles in our fleet, our recommendation would be to get EVs to replace those vehicles. It's a no-brainer."

For more information about electric vehicles, please visit [Saskatoon.ca/EV](https://saskatoon.ca/EV).

