Driver Profile

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Condo residents: It's time to plug into electric driving

By Jeannie Armstrong

Tyler is living proof that electric vehicle ownership is not only possible for people living in condos and apartments, it's easier than you might think.

A structural engineer, Tyler lives in the historic Second Avenue Lofts, once home to the Hudson Bay department store. His Tesla Model 3, along with his wife's Tesla SUV, are parked in the building's underground parkade.

Tyler has been driving electric since 2018 and was the first resident in the building to bring home an electric vehicle.

His charging solution? An affordable and easy to install 'stove plug'.

"It's a NEMA 14-50 receptacle," explains Tyler, referring to the 50-amp, 240-volt outlet commonly used for ranges.

"Some people think you have to spend a bunch of money installing a charger, but you just need the right receptacle. You plug your own charging equipment into that. That's what condo buildings should be prepared to provide."

A splitter allows the Tylers' two EVs to share the same outlet. The system automatically charges one vehicle to the selected percentage then switches over to the other. *"We can also charge both vehicles at the same time, just at a lower amperage,"* says Tyler. It's simple, affordable and effective.

"I first got permission from the condo board to do this. I had to make sure I had a registered, licensed electrician with the proper insurance, just like any other renovation requires," says Tyler. *"Our breaker panel is right beside our parking stall, which made it easy. There are currently about five people in our building that have receptacles for EV charging. For those whose parking stalls are farther away from a breaker panel, installation was more expensive."*

It's not only condo dwellers with parkades that can drive electric. *"I know multiple people who have EVs in apartment buildings with outdoor parking lots. They utilize the block heater plug-ins to charge their EVs. It's slower and less convenient, but not impossible. On really cold days, they might need to visit a fast DC public charger to top up every once in a while,"* says Tyler.

As more people adopt EV ownership, Tyler sees demand increasing for multi-family developments with built-in charging infrastructure. *"In my work as a structural engineer, I'm seeing quite a few builders and developers starting to think about this. Accommodating charging infrastructure is really easy to do in the planning stages."*

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Photos feature the individual and vehicle(s) profiled in this article.

CONVENIENT AND SAFE

Tyler appreciates how driving electric fits seamlessly into everyday life. With overnight charging, even on a basic receptacle, you start each morning with what is essentially a full tank. *"You don't have to stop on the way to work to gas up,"* says Tyler.

He also loves his Tesla's driving experience.

***"The power, speed and acceleration are huge performance perks,"* says Tyler.**

"Another benefit is winter performance. Electric vehicles are the most dependable vehicles you could have in winter. They always start."

Tyler also points out the superior safety features of electric vehicles, including the reduced risk of rollovers because of their low centre of gravity. The heavy battery packs that are part of the vehicle's structure also provide enhanced side-impact protection.

He has heard of condo boards rejecting residents' requests for EV parking because of a fear of battery fires. Tyler says the statistics show this to be a misconception.

Fire investigation platform Blazestack reports that battery electric vehicles experience approximately 25 fires per 100,000 vehicles sold, compared to 1,530 fires per 100,000 internal combustion engine (ICE) vehicles, based on data from 2024-2025. The report states that EV fire rates are low on a percentage basis, but when they do happen, they're operationally complex (longer burn times and harder suppression).

"Some condo boards say their insurance companies won't provide coverage because of the risk of EV fires. They're misinformed. If that happens, a condo board should look for a new insurer," says Tyler. EV fires in Saskatoon are extremely rare, he adds. With thousands of EVs operating across Saskatchewan, there has been no evidence of widespread fire risk associated with normal EV charging.

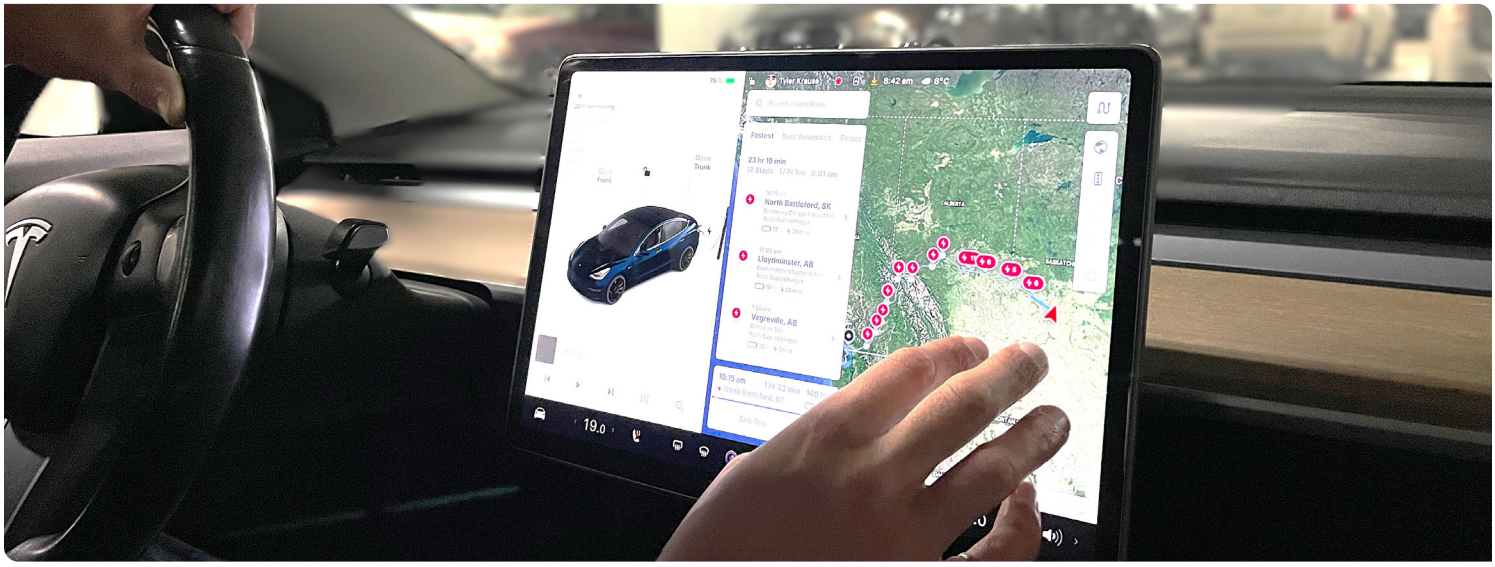
CONSIDER THIS

For condo dwellers thinking of switching to an EV, Tyler offers some points to ponder.

First, find out if your condo board will allow you to park and charge your EV, he says. *"The next step is to figure out the cost of putting in a charger or receptacle. Will the building share some of those costs? Some condos want to incentivize this because it brings measurable benefits,"* says Tyler.

"It's just better to have EVs in a condo. It contributes to cleaner air. There's less oil on the ground. It also attracts more people who want to live there. It's a good incentive."

For more information about electric vehicles, please visit Saskatoon.ca/EV.



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