

Supporting America's Firefighters and Emergency Responders to Electric Vehicles (SAFER EVs) Act of 2024

The Issue: As the number of electric vehicles (EVs) on roadways grows, so does the risk of their involvement in crashes or other emergencies. Emergency personnel must be familiar with the unique threats they could face so that they can respond appropriately to these situations.

EVs can present unique challenges to first responders who are used to dealing with traditional vehicles. Batteries are often damaged in accidents, exposing the passengers and emergency personnel to hazardous chemicals, electric shocks, and battery fires. These fires burn unusually hot, and can spontaneously reignite hours after they are first extinguished.

Unfortunately, current estimates indicate that only 25% of active firefighters have received any type of training on how to respond to emergencies involving EVs. The SAFER EVs Act coordinates efforts at the federal level to produce and deliver up-to-date EVs safety information and training materials to first responders.

The Solution: The SAFER EVs Act would require the Department of Energy (DOE), the Department of Transportation (DOT), and the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) to coordinate efforts relating to EV safety and testing standards research and deploy EV training to first responders across the United States. The DOE will first produce a technical report aggregating relevant information for emergency responders. In the development of the report, DOE will coordinate with DOT and consult with a broad range of federal and nonfederal stakeholders. The bill will also require DOE, in consultation with the National Fire Protection Association, to update training standards related to EVs and improve the accessibility and delivery of EV training and safety information through the State Fire Training Grants. Additionally, the bill:

- Authorizes an additional \$10,000,000 annually for State Fire Training Grants to support widespread EV-specific training delivery
- Requires the coordinating agencies to revisit the technical report and update it every 3 years to keep up with technological and research advancements
- Requires the National Highway Transportation Safety Administration to consider emergency response guides provided by the vehicle manufacturer when assessing a vehicle's NCAP score
- Requires the publication and distribution of EV emergency response guides to all first and second responders (such as tow truck operators and salvage yard owners)