

AUTOMOTIVE

Study finds EV misconceptions pervade despite embrace of electric auto options

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Many Americans feel their attitude toward electric vehicles has improved in the last three years, according to the survey. Image credit: Cargurus.co.uk

By MARYBETH CONNAUGHTON

U.S. renewable energy firm Ascend Elements finds that while more Americans embrace electric vehicles (EVs), many still have lingering misconceptions about them.

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In fact, nearly half of those surveyed mistakenly believe that the lithium-ion batteries powering EVs cannot be recycled. Other mistaken beliefs pertain to the makeup of the batteries, the proper way to dispose of them, and the cost involved in manufacturing them.

"We've encountered many myths and misconceptions about electric vehicles and, in particular, EV battery recycling," said Roger Lin, vice president of marketing and government relations at [Ascend Elements](#), in a statement.

Ascend Elements' findings were based on an independent survey of 1,004 U.S. consumers conducted in August 2022. Those surveyed were asked about their beliefs regarding EVs and battery technology.

Myths About Lithium

A new survey brings to light many of the myths and misconceptions surrounding EVs.

As Ascend Elements explains, electric vehicle battery recycling is a booming industry. Its halted progress is due in part to a fight against consumer perceptions.

As it turns out, EV batteries are made of materials such as nickel, lithium and cobalt which can be recycled an infinite number of times with no cost to performance.

33%

of Americans think lithium-ion batteries can be recycled in the household recycling bin.



A recent survey by Ascend Elements found that 33 percent of Americans mistakenly believe lithium-ion batteries can be recycled in the household recycling bin. Image courtesy of Ascend Elements

Another myth about lithium batteries reflected by the survey is that they cannot be made of other old batteries.

Nearly 40 percent of those queried believed this, which Ascend Elements explains is also not true. EV batteries can be made from old consumer electronics batteries such as those found in laptops and cellphones.

Forty-four percent of consumers surveyed believe this process of making new lithium batteries is more expensive than the traditional way. Ascend Elements states that the process can actually be completed at a lower cost than more traditional manufacturing methods.

That EV batteries are recyclable does not mean they can be grouped with other common household items, as 34 percent of consumers seem to think. The batteries contain hazardous materials that don't belong in household bins, warns Ascend Elements.

Nor, it explains to 27 percent of those surveyed, should these batteries be discarded via regular household trash, as this holds the potential to cause explosions at waste management facilities. Instead, they should be deposited in authorized areas.

Based in Westborough, Massachusetts, Ascend Elements is a leader in providing sustainable battery material solutions.

Charging forth, Changing minds

Despite any lingering misconceptions, U.S. attitudes toward EVs seem to be moving forward.

Fifty-three percent of U.S. consumers feel more positive toward EVs than they did three years ago. Forty-six percent believe EVs will outsell gas-powered vehicles in their lifetime.

The survey cites Bloomberg New Energy Finance Limited's [2022 Electric Vehicle Outlook](#), which reflects EV demand rapidly increasing.

Industry experts believe that EVs will surpass gas-powered vehicles by 2040. This coincides with an increase in high-end automakers advancing their production of EVs ([see story](#)).

As companies like Ascend Elements continue to uncover and address misinformation regarding EVs, this positive trend is likely to continue.

"The industry has made terrific advances in the efficiency and cost-effectiveness of lithium-ion battery recycling, but these false narratives about EV batteries continue," Mr. Lin said.

"We are changing that by creating an infrastructure that would make it unthinkable to let a lithium-ion battery go to

landfill," he said. "They are just too valuable."

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