

# Britons offered cash grants to buy electric cars

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An electric car made by the Reva Electric Car Company in London on April 16, 2009. Motorists in Britain could receive up to 5,000 pounds if they buy an electric car under government proposals unveiled Thursday.

British motorists could receive up to 5,000 pounds (5,700 euros, 7,500 dollars) if they buy an electric car under government proposals unveiled Thursday.

The plan comes as part of a 250-million-pound scheme to make motoring greener, and ministers hope it will help Britain meet its target of slashing carbon emissions by 80 percent by 2050.

Transport Secretary Geoff Hoon said he wanted electric cars to become a much more common sight on Britain's streets.

"What we've got to get people used to is the idea that electric cars will

become quite normal, quite usual, that it won't be exceptional and, without being slightly unkind to existing electric vehicles, they won't be slightly odd," he told the Guardian newspaper.

The scheme also includes 20 million pounds to build more charging points and other infrastructure needed for people to use [electric cars](#) regularly.

Unveiling the scheme with Hoon, business minister Peter Mandelson urged Britain's auto industry -- which has been hit hard by the world [economic slowdown](#) -- "to be a leader in the low carbon future".

While welcoming the announcement, John Proctor, a spokesman for industry body Society of Motor Manufacturers and Traders (SMMT), said the car sector needed support to stay afloat in the short-term.

"The key thing is that the industry is in the middle of its biggest-ever economic challenge," he said.

"We need something in the short-term if we're going to stake our claim in developing low-carbon technology in the medium and long-term."

The SMMT is urging the government to announce a scrappage scheme, which would pay motorists to ditch old cars for new, in next week's annual budget.

The proposed incentives would be introduced in 2011, by which time ministers believe more electric and plug-in hybrid cars will be on the market.

Their introduction depends on Prime Minister Gordon Brown's currently unpopular government winning the next general election, expected to be held next year.

The main opposition Conservatives, who have a double-digit lead in most opinion polls, have put the environment at the heart of their policies.

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