

**TOO
GETHR**



ELECTRIFICATION OF YOUR LEASE FLEET

About charging challenges at the office and what you can do as a facility professional.

WHITEPAPER



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1. CHALLENGES OF AN ELECTRIC FLEET

The world is becoming more sustainable. The advance of electric vehicles is an important driver behind the transition towards a more sustainable society. Electric vehicles are becoming increasingly attractive to people and companies, while at the same time, regulations on carbon emissions are becoming stricter. Many cities have already introduced so-called environmental zones which are off-limits to cars with excessive emissions.

And that is just the beginning. At least 30 cities in the Netherlands will establish zero-emission zones by 2025. You can only enter these zones by car if your vehicle is free of carbon emissions (electric or hydrogen).

According to the EU's current time line for phasing out fossil fuel-burning vehicles, every new lease car on the continent will have to be electric in ten years, and ten years later this will apply to all passenger cars.¹ This transition brings many challenges – some predictable, others less so – which every company must face sooner or later. One particularly challenging issue is charging, as you have probably experienced at your own office's car park. Charging an electric car simply works differently than filling up your petrol tank: the old-fashioned way. In most cities, charging stations are in short supply, and charging takes a lot longer than filling up the tank.

Sustainability is also an increasingly popular strategy for companies to stand out as attractive employers in today's tight labour market. Job seekers today are more interested than ever in working for sustainable companies who have a proven track record of making a difference for the environment. Marc van der Seijs, mobility advisor at consultancy Syndesmo says, "Generation Z job seekers are interested above all in how potential employers contribute to the world. Only after they're sure of that will they look at what the work environment is like and what exactly the job entails."

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– Marc van der Seijs, Mobility Consultant Syndesmo

There are many questions looming over car parks at office buildings and other workplaces today. Are there enough charging points? Is the power grid up to the task? Who has priority at the charging station? Is there enough parking space for cars that have finished charging? These questions are not only on the minds of companies, but also their employees who need to be able to charge their electric cars simply to get to and from work every day.

In this whitepaper, you'll learn how facility managers can respond to fleet electrification and the charging issues it poses. First, we explore why we predict that these challenges will only get more important in the near future. Along with insights from facility managers working for large companies, we share our view of what's at stake in charging and parking management – and what you can do to prepare for the electric future.



2. **WHY ELECTRIC VEHICLES ARE THE FUTURE, NO MATTER WHAT**

For years, electric vehicles represented only a very small minority of cars on the market, which gave daily commute drivers a good reason not to go electric. This has changed rapidly over the past few years. Today, electric vehicles come in all shapes and sizes, from city cars to SUVs and estate cars. Private lease is a very attractive option for people who drive privately but wouldn't consider buying an expensive electric car outright.

One of the most common arguments against electric vehicles is their limited range, which has made them a no-go for long-distance drivers in particular. Marc van der Seijs says, "It's not so much about the range, but the charging speed. And charging speed is getting better and better." Slowly, the old, familiar reasons for not going electric are falling by the wayside. At the same time, the desire to create a more sustainable world is pulling more and more people towards electric vehicles. As a result, electric cars represent a fast-growing segment of vehicles in company car parks. In the Netherlands, electric cars already account for a quarter of new car sales; in Belgium, it's 15%. It may seem distant now, but there will be a time when the majority of cars in your car park will consist of EV's.

Climate Measures

A major accelerator for the switch to electric cars in countries like the Netherlands has been the Paris Climate Accords. Under the Accords, national governments and the private sector are obligated to work together to counteract climate change. In the Netherlands, one rule that stands out is the obligation for companies to monitor their CO2 emissions. Starting January 1st 2024, companies with 100 employees or more must keep track of CO2 emissions generated by their employees' work-related travel.² Employees who drive electric cars generate zero emissions whilst driving, which saves their employers from the hassle of calculating their emissions. It's likely that this will encourage large companies to support their employees in transitioning to an electric fleet, which will represent a major step towards actually reducing CO2 emissions.

Fiscal Greening

A major accelerator for electrification in the Netherlands has been the country's policy of fiscal "greening". Under the current Dutch tax code, non-electric cars will no longer be tax deductible five years from now. Until then, a phase-out time line is in place. The government is offering tax breaks to people and companies who buy charging stations during the next two years. This is enabling organisations to offer their employees a comprehensive mobility budget with an emphasis on environmentally friendly mobility options, such as public transport, bicycles or electric cars.

“We encourage employees to drive electric cars because sustainability is a key focus for EY. Combustion cars are becoming more and more expensive to lease, and fewer and fewer people are interested in them. There are already more people leasing electric cars than conventional, fuel-burning vehicles.”

– Kees Eriks, facility manager at EY



3. THE BATTLE OVER THE CHARGING STATION

As people and organisations embrace a more sustainable attitude – and as climate regulations become stricter – the number of electric cars in company car parks will continue to sharply increase in the years ahead. What are some of the challenges – both predictable and less predictable – that this transition will bring with it?

No Extra Charging Stations, but also no Charging Management

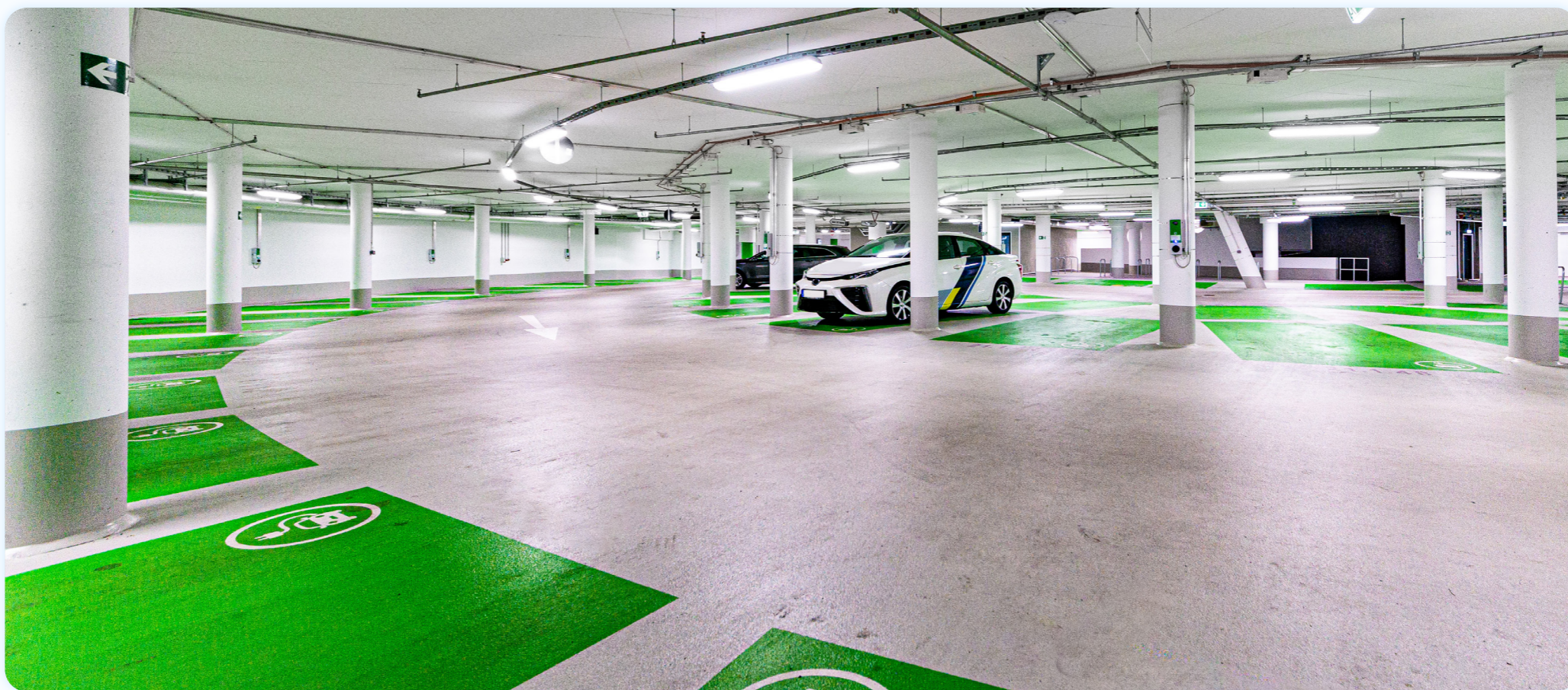
Just because a company decides to switch to an electric fleet, it doesn't mean they always have the option of installing additional charging points in their car park. Installing charging points is not only cost-intensive, but also faces limitations due to the existing power grid infrastructure. It's also a time-consuming process, often subject to long waiting times. In some cases, it's simply not possible. Installation takes months in some regions due to grid congestion alone (blockages in the power grid caused by peaks of solar and wind energy). Egbert Hietberg, CCO of charge post & service provider 50 five, says "If your car park is inside a grid congestion area, you often don't even have the option to install a charging station, or it takes a lot longer than it would in another location. Grid operators are simply struggling to keep up with the demand." To complicate things even further, companies often overlook the important topic of charge management. How can you ensure your employees are sharing your precious few charging stations fairly, and who gets priority?

"It will take another 10 to 15 years before the supply catches up with the demand for new charging stations. You can already see that the number of cars needing charging stations is increasing, but companies don't have systems in place to manage this. People arrive at work with a more or less full battery, but still want to charge their car. And then around 4 in the afternoon, they'll get a message asking them to move their car, because someone else needs to recharge just to get home from work that day."

– Roel Pennings, founder of Plugz

Who Gets to Charge First?

Many organisations give different parking rights to different groups of employees, mostly based on seniority. Managers often have their own reserved parking spaces. The question is whether the same rule should apply to charging spaces. Is seniority still the best way to determine who gets priority? Isn't it more logical to give priority to the driver whose car has the flattest battery? Or is it better to let travelling reps and field service technicians charge first? They need to use their car to actually do their job, compared to someone who works all day in the office. And what about visitors? All of these questions highlight the challenges companies are facing as they update their parking policies to prepare for an electrified vehicle fleet.



Who Pays What?

Employees with an electric car pay for each charge with a charging pass. The price for electricity varies from one charging station provider to the next. Users receive a monthly bill. With today's high energy prices, fewer people are interested in charging their cars at home, which can easily run up against energy caps set by many national governments for annual household energy consumption. Once a consumer in the Netherlands exceeds the 2,900-kWh annual limit, they pay far more than the capped price of 40 cents per kWh, for example. As a result, many electric car drivers prefer to charge away from home, which means more and more of them are charging at work.

“If you charge an electric car at home, you're definitely going to notice it on your electricity bill. Somewhere in the middle of the year, you'll exceed the national energy cap and.”

– Kees Eriks, EY

The Infamous Charging Pole Hijacker

Ideally, every charging station should be able to identify employees' cars and deny access to others. Unfortunately, the technology used in many charging stations is not yet that advanced. In many cases, a charging station can be programmed to work with either just one car, or all cars. This means that random drivers in the area are free to simply plug in and "hijack" your car park's charging stations, leaving your employees without an option to charge their vehicles.



Inefficiencies Related to Parking

Charging issues are the biggest headache related to managing a fleet of electric cars. Yet the most common complaint is that drivers leave their fully charged vehicles connected to the charging station instead of moving it away to free up the station for others to use. This results in extremely inefficient use of the charging station throughout the day. To make matters worse, many charging points have a low power output, which makes charging much slower, especially if your electric car is a newer model. "All in all, charging stations are only being used about 50 per cent as efficiently as they could be", says Roel Pennings. Considering the difficulties of installing new charging stations (see above), it makes sense to use the stations you already have as efficiently as possible.

— "There is a lot of room to improve how efficiently charging stations are being used, because currently they're only being used at about 50 per cent of their capacity. Many people who drive newer electric cars will see a low-power charging station and simply drive on." —

– Roel Pennings, founder of Plugz

4. **WHAT SOLUTIONS ARE AVAILABLE?**

As electric cars become more and more prevalent in office car parks, companies are facing many new technical and organisational hurdles. Fortunately, there are already many solutions; some involve organising your facilities more effectively, others involve integrating smarter technologies.

Additional Staffing

One way to manage your car park's charging capacity more effectively is to simply put more people to work there. Some offices have switched to valet parking for electric cars, for example. The driver simply drops off their car in the morning and valet drivers take care of the charging during the day. When a car is fully charged, the valet drivers simply remove it from the station, so the next car can be connected. Some companies are delegating charge management tasks to their existing security staff. Throughout the day, those employees keep watch over the charging cars to make sure the charging station is continually in use. They can easily see from the colour of the charging station display whether the vehicle is still charging or not. Some charging stations also display the remaining charging time. Once a car is recharged, the security staff contacts the owner to ask them to move it. The only challenge to a system like this is that in a large car park, overseeing the car park's electric cars can easily become a full-time job in itself. It may be unrealistic to ask a security staff member to combine it with their other responsibilities.

More Social Control

Another option is to leave the charging station monitoring to your employees themselves. At some companies, all electric car drivers are added to a group chat, such as a WhatsApp group. This creates an easy-access channel for drivers to exchange information. For example, if you urgently need to charge your car, you can let the other drivers know, and see whether they can give you priority that day. The challenge to a solution like this is that not everyone will actively participate in the group chat, which means some important requests or notifications will be overlooked.

“We used to have a WhatsApp group, but now there are just too many electric cars to keep up with. There are about 1,200 cars at our office car park. A lot of those drivers are from other branches, plus you’ve constantly got new people joining the company, and people leaving the company, so it just no longer worked to try to manage it all via WhatsApp.”

– Kees Eriks, EY



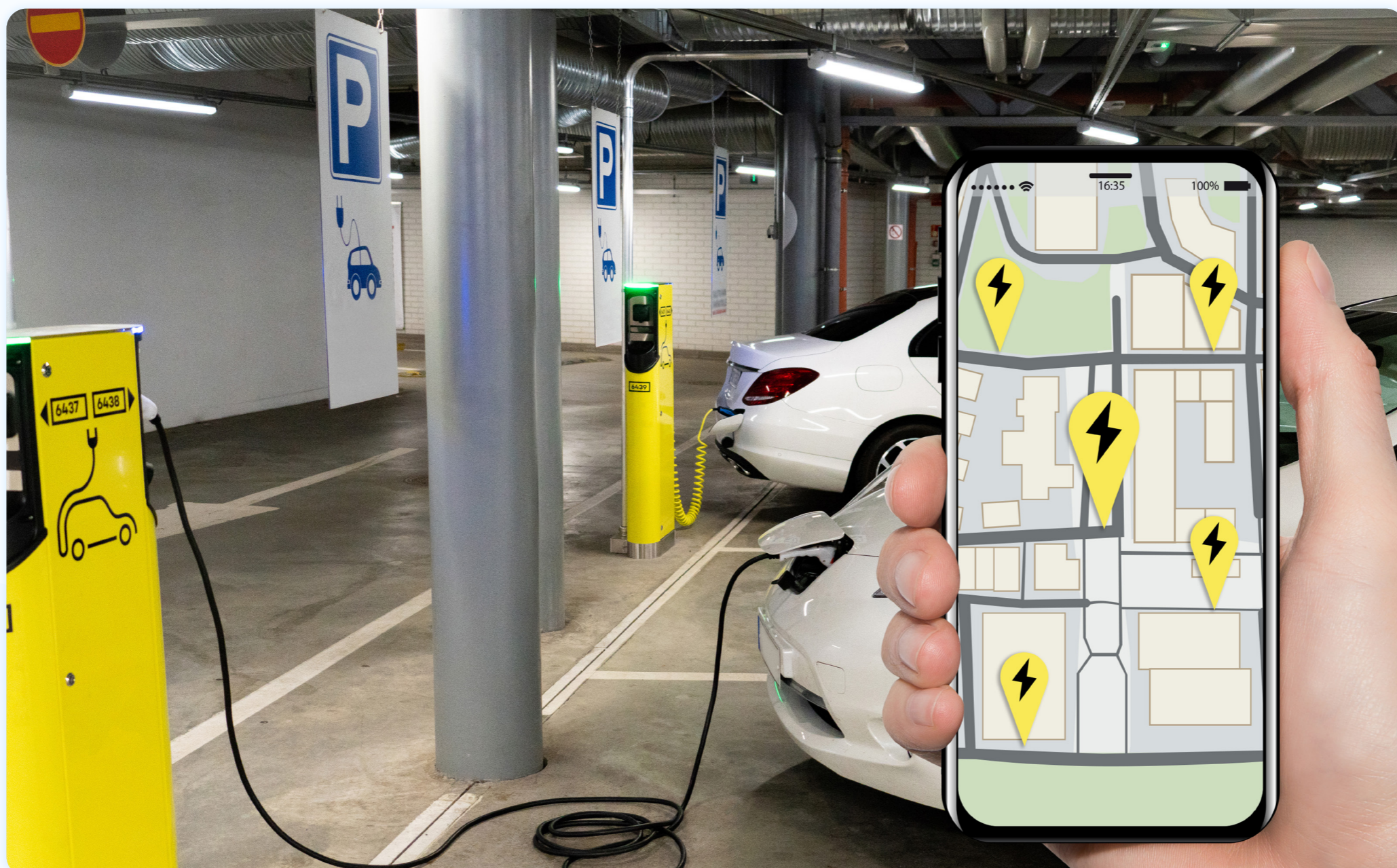
Smart Grouping of Charging Points

Today, the more-less standard configuration for charging stations is either one per parking space, or a double charging station for two parking spaces. If you position your charging point wisely, it can be used to serve four parking spaces. In that case, the charging station is located in the middle, with two parking spaces on either side. Electric drivers park their car in one of the four spots, even if the charging station is already occupied. They then take turns charging throughout the day, without having to move the cars. This is a space-saving solution, but it might mean making some major readjustments in your car park. And it won't necessarily solve all the hassles related to charging, nor will it automatically notify drivers when their cars are fully charged.

Smart Technologies for Charging and Parking

All of the challenges described above can be solved using new technologies. For example, 50 five's charging stations are pre-installed with "charge balancing" software. Charge balancing ensures that charging power is balanced with what the power grid can handle at any given time. This is an attractive option for offices located in grid congestion areas. There are also tech tools for overseeing who has charging priority, and preventing charge waste, developed by Togethr and Plugz. The two companies' collaborating software provides users with real-time insight into free charging and parking spaces and allows users to reserve a parking space as well as a charging station. It also allows your company to determine which cars have priority for charging.

As a result, you can encourage positive charging etiquette with a smart prioritisation system that groups drivers according to how many kWh they need to make their commute, how quickly their vehicle charges and other factors. Lastly, technology can also help you use your charging stations more efficiently. For example, when a driver's car is fully charged, you can automatically send them a push notification whilst also informing the next driver that they can start charging. This ensures you're always getting maximum usage from your existing charging stations.



5. CONCLUSION

The number of electric cars on the road is rising much faster than the number of charging points. Companies are seeing this imbalance play out in their car parks every day. If charging stations are not a hot topic for your office car park now, they will be so on. Egbert Hietberg says, “You can already achieve a lot as a company by thinking carefully. But if you look on a national level, at what is possible and what should be installed, we do have a challenge.” Above, we outlined why electric cars are quickly becoming the norm – and the consequence this will have on your company car park. Some ways to respond to this include putting more staff to work in your car park, or setting up group chats among drivers. Yet both of these approaches come with clear limitations. Your staff is busy enough as it is, and a group chat doesn’t always work. Fortunately, smart technologies can help you overcome these challenges. With the right software, you can automatically optimise the way your employees use your charging and parking capacity, so you restore peace to the car park.



DO YOU RECOGNISE THESE CHALLENGES?

In our interactions with HR and mobility managers every day, these are some of the most frequent topics we hear about:

- ✓ Challenges related to **hybrid working**
- ✓ Making **mobility more sustainable** and **reducing their carbon footprint**
- ✓ The **electrification** of the vehicle fleet
- ✓ **High energy prices** for both employers and employees

Do any of these challenges sound familiar? And are you curious how we can help your organisation reduce its CO2 footprint, lower mobility costs and increase employee satisfaction? Then schedule a no-obligation demo with Roel, our dedicated parking expert.

During the demo, he'll outline a clear understanding of your situation and the challenges you might face and give you a tour of our possible solutions. You'll also have plenty of time to ask questions, and there's never any obligation to buy. Click the button below to schedule your preferred time slot.

Contactformulier

Book a demo

SPECIAL THANKS



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SOURCES (IN DUTCH)

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ABOUT TOOGETHR

Toogethr has been helping companies, including Heineken, Danone and Red Bull, to optimise their parking policies and make commuting more sustainable since 2016. With Toogethr's Smart Parking software, we help companies gain insight, reduce parking congestion and increase efficiency, hardware agnostic. With our Toogethr Cycles app we offer a all-in-one solution for promoting cycling and optimize the reachability of offices and real estate in the European Union.

Our products help organisations reduce their CO2 footprint, improve office accessibility and become more attractive as employers.

Toogethr is a proud part of the AutoBinck Group.

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