



Written by [James Murphy](#) on October 5, 2024

# The Very Real Danger of Wet Electric Vehicles Catching Fire

In the run-up to Hurricane Helene striking his state in late September, Florida Governor Ron DeSantis warned citizens to be careful about allowing their electric vehicles (EVs) to become inundated with water because of the possibility of fire. With more than 250,000 EVs registered in the state, DeSantis felt it prudent to tell citizens that the vehicles they may have purchased to do their part to address climate change weren't necessarily the best thing to have in Hurricane Alley.



Mike Bird/Pexels

## DeSantis' Warning Is Prudent

[DeSantis warned](#) Floridians as Helene picked up strength:

If you have an EV, you need to get that to higher land. Be careful about that getting inundated. It can cause fires.

"Just know that when you have saltwater intrusion on that, those can catch on fire," he told a press conference. [He recalled](#) such instances during Hurricane Ian in 2022. "Really big homes, but the EV caught fire and burned the house down."

So, potentially, a home could survive a hurricane but be destroyed in a fire caused by an EV left in a garage.

Hysterical climate cultists may have thought that DeSantis was only relating a tired, climate-denier talking point regarding electric vehicles being dangerous, but the Florida governor was right. When water, particularly salt water — the kind you see from a storm surge as a result of a hurricane — submerges lithium-ion batteries, a fire can occur.

## Experts Echo the Warning

Even a branch of the U.S. military issued a safety alert about it.

"Saltwater exposure can significantly degrade lithium-ion (Li-ion) batteries, causing a chemical reaction that creates an extreme fire risk," the U.S. Coast Guard [warns](#) in a safety alert.

EV maker Tesla [stresses](#) that EV owners should never attempt to use a vehicle that may have been submerged. In fact, it should immediately be inspected by an authorized shop prior to using. "Safely tow or move the vehicle at least 50 ft (15 m) from structures or other combustible materials such as other cars and personal property," a Tesla directive states.

[Business Insider quoted](#) Richard Bucknall, a professor of marine systems at the University College London. He explained that lithium batteries

can short circuit if flooded, especially in seawater, leading to immediate overheating and



potential fire and explosion....

Unfortunately, there is no such thing as a perfect container where violent storms are concerned so it isn't a surprise to me or other engineers [that fires may occur].

### **Fires Extreme**

Moreover, EV fires with lithium batteries can be extremely difficult to extinguish. In July, [remember](#), a semi trailer hauling such lithium-ion batteries overturned on I-15 between Barstow and Baker, California, causing the busy freeway to be shut down for an extended period. Toxic smoke plumed from the incident for more than 30 hours.

It doesn't take an engineer to see that this problem with lithium batteries represents a possible design flaw in EVs.

According to Tesla, the incidence rate of fires in EVs is smaller than that of internal combustion vehicles. But, as we continue to see, putting those fires out is far more difficult.

In the 1960s, Chevrolet produced an innovative new smaller vehicle known as the Corvair. it was popular, but design flaws and a scandalous book caused the vehicle to be removed from the market.

EVs are now facing real safety concerns. But the federal government only shrugs, says "climate change," and overlooks those concerns.

Where the manufactured crisis of climate change is concerned, only fossil fuel emissions attract government attention. EVs don't emit emissions from a tailpipe; therefore they are good. Just forget about the fact that they might catch fire and burn for days.



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