

## Chevy Volt Myths Debunked

Posted on 12 June 2012 by [Chad Gallion](#)



When the [Chevy Volt](#) was launched by [GM](#) in 2010, it won the 2011 North American Car of the Year, as everyone expected. Most people recognized it as a game changer from American manufacturer, General Motors. High hopes rested on consumers who would embrace the Volt as the car they were begging Detroit to build. Finally, something to compete with the Japanese juggernaut, the [Toyota Prius](#). However, hardly anyone could have anticipated the insanely politicized and polarizing response the car would generate in the wake of government bailouts, presidential campaigns, and fickle environmental agendas.

As a result of many ill-informed and politically-driven commentaries about the Chevy Volt, consumers have struggled to understand the vehicle and its place in the market. Many unfounded myths and urban legends surround GM's torchbearer into the future of automotive technology. We at BoldRide would like to address and debunk some of these myths to highlight this groundbreaking and forward-thinking automobile.

Myth #1: It's just a Prius, but a Chevy.



When it comes to [hybrids](#), the average consumer has no idea what the technology is doing. They probably understand it as well as they understand microwaves. Basically, you push buttons and magic happens. Thus, when they hear that the Volt is a hybrid, they think, "Oh, so it's a [Prius](#)." Congrats to [Toyota](#) for creating that level of brand name recognition.

The big difference is the Volt is a plug-in, [electric](#) vehicle game changer, while the Prius is a plain, old, parallel hybrid. Essentially, the Volt is an electric car with a gas generator, whereas the Prius is a regular ICE (internal combustion engine) car with added electric power. "So what," you say?

Well, that means the Chevy Volt is the only mass-market "electric car" that you can drive from coast-to-coast, non-stop. The Prius would be using ICE power, almost exclusively, traversing America's highways. The [Nissan Leaf](#), an all-electric competitor, would take weeks to get across the USA due to charging times from external power sources. The Volt, because it is essentially an electric vehicle, would be using electric-only power to drive the wheels, and an ICE engine to charge the batteries when needed. So, only the Chevy Volt meets the coveted "Smokey and the Bandit" flexibility of delivering food products to frivolous, rich dudes.

The clever Volt can operate as a battery electric vehicle (BEV) for up to 38 miles (the Prius only 15 miles), and then seamlessly switch to a generator-powered electric vehicle. On top of that, the Volt can use the ICE engine to add power under hard acceleration and operate like a parallel hybrid, just like the Prius. Not to mention, you can plug it into an external power supply to recharge the batteries when not in use. Something the Prius is only now figuring out how to do.

Myth #2: Isn't it expensive for a compact car?



Whenever someone decides to make the jump forward along the technology continuum, it always costs a little more. Take Apple's iPhone for example. If you wanted to be one of the first to own one, you ended up paying a pretty penny for that privilege. Early adopting a plug-in hybrid is a similar situation, but a better value with the Chevy Volt.

Taking advantage of the \$7,500 federal tax credit, the Chevy Volt's MSRP sits around \$32,000. That's slightly more money than the smaller, all-electric [Nissan Leaf](#), but you get a larger, better equipped car with a substantially longer range. Not only that, but you also get GM's OnStar service and a 100,000-mile powertrain warranty. Based on info from KBB.com and Consumer Reports, depreciation on the Chevy Volt is very reasonable at around 50% over three years of ownership. That's about the same as any other [Chevrolet](#) vehicle, and just slightly more than the Toyota Prius. Keep in mind though, you may be paying as much as \$500/year less in fuel costs each of those three years of ownership, compared to a Prius.

Myth #3: An all-electric car is better.



While all-electric vehicles are going to provide zero tailpipe emission compared to the minimal emissions of the Chevy Volt, in this case, cleanliness is next to inconvenience. Within our fast-paced day and age, who has time and energy to meticulously plan out every trip in their car based on limited range and charging times. No one I know who is married with kids is ready to put all-electric vehicles into their lives.

The Volt's 1.4-liter "range extender" engine is a safety net you would have to be ridiculous to ignore. On a regular day, with a simple commute to and from work, you get all the benefits of all-electric transportation. However, when that hot office secretary invites you to Vegas for a saucy romp, you are ready to go right away. How long would it take to drive, charge, and wait your way to Vegas in an all-electric Nissan Leaf? Long enough for the secretary to find plenty of other range-extending chaps to take her up on her offer.

Myth #4: Won't it just spontaneously catch fire? Think of the children!





Car fire. Not pictured, Chevy Volt.

What is it with people accusing hybrids and electric cars of catching fire? I guess, like in days of old, people simply fear what they don't quite understand. On average in the US, one person per day dies in a highway vehicle fire out of the 31 reported fires per hour. PER HOUR.

At the time of this writing, there have been three reported Chevy Volt fires. None of these fires happened when the vehicles were being driven by a consumer or when there were occupants in the car. The Chevy Volt fire that occurred at the NHTSA's testing facility happened three weeks after the crash test. THREE WEEKS. It had nothing to do with the actual crash, but centered around improper storage and battery discharging of the crashed vehicle. Despite this fact, Chevrolet opted to review and reinforce the protection around the Volt's battery pack.

Statistically speaking, almost any car that you are currently driving is more likely to catch fire while driving than a Volt. ALMOST ANY CAR! People seem to forget that the internal combustion engine uses fire and tiny explosions to move you down the road, while the Volt, in all-electric mode, is merely using safe, reliable electricity to quietly cruise down the highway. FIRE AND EXPLOSIONS! While no car is completely safe, it's pretty hard to suggest that any modern electric or hybrid vehicle is less safe than a comparable ICE-powered vehicle.

Myth #5: It's made of government bailout money.



The Chevy Volt has to be one of the most highly politicized vehicles in history. It would hardly be more divisive if it was made solely of endangered species carcasses and was fueled by burning American flags. Chastised as a vehicle conceived by tree-hugging hippies, built by government bailouts, and subsidized by President Obama's fiscal irresponsibility, the Volt has become a political punching bag.

The accusations, like most things in politics, couldn't be further from the truth. The Volt was put into action under the guidance of the very right wing, environmental skeptic, Bob Lutz. "Maximum" Bob saw that [Tesla Motors](#) was building a viable electric vehicle and felt that GM, with all of their resources and expertise, could no longer sit on its hands. Long before taking government loans, GM was committed to building a plug-in hybrid competitor to the popular Toyota Prius, something politicians had been harassing US automakers to build for numerous years.

Politicians complain about the \$7,500 tax credit for green technology vehicles as being part of Obama's socialist scheming. They should be reminded that this tax credit was an inherited policy from former-president Bush.

At one point, Newt Gingrich (who names a kid Newt anyways?) said, "you can't put a gun rack in a Chevy Volt" and accused it of being the "Obama-car." Chevy Volt sales have shown a marked increase in 2012, while Newt Gingrich has dropped out of the Republican political race. Volt 1, Newt 0.

Myth #6: The batteries will wear out in like 5-years, won't they?



Modern battery technology and applications are leaps and bounds ahead of what they were merely a decade ago. Chevrolet was well aware of the risks involved in battery demands of a product that the average consumer uses for around six years. Chevy came up with some innovative solutions to make sure battery longevity would not be an issue.

First off, the batteries come with a 100,000 mile guarantee to give owners peace of mind. Secondly, the Volt features a sophisticated charging program that keeps the batteries in a specific SOC (state-of-charge) that helps maximize battery life. By carefully managing the SOC, battery power is expected to deplete only 10% over 8-10 years.

For most hybrid tech geeks, this should be more than enough longevity to enjoy before they swap out for the next high tech automobile revolution. My money is on autonomous, fusion-powered, massage-mobiles. Alright GM, let's get started on those.

Myth #7: Hybrid and electric cars are performance slugs.



Without a doubt, the Chevy Volt is the fastest mass production, four-door, front-wheel drive, electric vehicle with a range extender on sale in America, bar none. So, case closed as far as we're concerned.

Seriously though, how many people who are considering buying a Chevrolet Volt are really stressing out about its straight line performance and lap times? If they are, then they are missing the point entirely.

However, as far as green tech cars go, it's not too shabby. The Volt has the equivalent of 273 lb-ft of torque in a car that weighs an average 3,781 lbs. Acceleration from zero to 60 mph takes around nine seconds, which is about a second faster than a Toyota Prius V, and about the same as a [VW Golf TDI](#). Thankfully, electric motors give excellent torque delivery at all speeds.

[See more of the Chevrolet Volt here](#)

This article was posted also to [GM-Volt.com](#)