



The 2010 Prius PHV recharges in three hours from a 110-volt outlet and in half that time from a 220-volt source.

Prius can be recharged in three hours

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When we start our little trip, the EV distance is best stretched out under mild urban driving as opposed to harsh highway acceleration. Those first two battery packs get some recharging from regenerative braking but you will be able to watch the kilometer countdown on one of the many interactive dash display modes.

When the 20 kilometres is up, or the two battery packs deplete, they are simply done until the next time the driver plugs in for a recharge.

A solenoid seamlessly clicks over to the third battery pack and for the duration of the trip, the Prius PHV operates like any other regular Prius hybrid, harnessing the Atkinson Cycle 1.8-litre, 16-valve four-cylinder engine for

a combination of motive power and recharging of only the third battery pack.

When the trip is over, the Prius PHV can be recharged in three hours from a standard 110-volt outlet or in about half that time from a 220-volt source.

So, for urban errands it's easy to imagine knocking at least 20 kilometres off your gas bill, or maybe 40 kilometres for the daily commute if you have a place to plug in for the return trip while you're at work.

Based on Toyota's testing, the Prius Plug-In achieves a fuel consumption of just 1.75L/100km and CO2 emissions of 41 g/km under specified driving conditions (combined electric vehicle and hybrid vehicle modes).

Under moderate commuting conditions, compared to the typical conventional midsize automobile, driving a

Prius PHV for one year is expected to reduce fuel consumption by 1,650 litres (83 per cent) and cut CO2 emissions by almost 4,000 kg.

My fuel efficiency averages were close to that 1.75L/100km mark after an hour-long introductory drive but, of course, the longer your trip is, the more the hybrid mode average will eat into that initial fuel-free 20 kilometres. Other test results that I have seen have varied, ranging from 2L/100km to 3.5L/100km.

I certainly look forward to personally testing the Prius PHV in more rigorous real-world driving conditions, especially though a Canadian winter. But I'm not the only one.

That is why the 2010 Prius PHV I was driving is one of five Prius PHVs now being studied by university, utility and government partners in Ontario, Quebec, Manitoba and B.C.

Sometimes, solutions seem to raise more questions than answers in the early stages. But those tests, along with results from other worldwide fleets, will be combined with Toyota research to decide the price, the consumer demands and specifications of the production version Prius PHV destined to debut in 2012.

And then, the drivers will decide.

Anyone interested can find more info at www.toyota.ca. There's also a good U.S. site at www.toyota.com/esq.

And Canadian Prius enthusiasts are encouraged to join Toyota Canada's Prius PHV Facebook page for information on consumer test-drive event opportunities, telematics feedback updates from the test trials, and details on Toyota's sustainable mobility efforts at www.facebook.com/ToyotaCanadaPriusPlugIn.

Toyota Prius PHV 2010 At A Glance

BODY STYLE: Five-door liftback

DRIVE METHOD: front-engine, front-wheel-drive

ENGINE: Atkinson Cycle 1.8-litre, 16-valve four-cylinder engine combined with electric motor (134 hp combined net)

EV DISTANCE (electric-only): up to 20 kilometres

EV SPEED: up to 100 km/h

CHARGING TIME: 3 hours at 110 volts / 90 min. at 220 volts

FUEL ECONOMY: 1.75/100 km (combined estimate)

PRICE: Not for sale; 2012 model year price TBD

WEBSITE: www.Toyota.ca

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