

**U.S. Department of Energy - Energy Efficiency and Renewable Energy
Alternative Fuels Data Center**

What is Electricity?

Electricity is unique among the alternative fuels in that mechanical power is derived directly from it, whereas the other alternative fuels release stored chemical energy through combustion to provide mechanical power. Motive power is produced from electricity by an electric motor. Electricity used to power vehicles is commonly provided by batteries, but fuel cells are also being explored. Batteries are energy storage devices, but unlike batteries, fuel cells convert chemical energy to electricity. To learn more about fuel cells, go to the DOE's [Hydrogen, Fuel Cells, and Infrastructure Technologies Program](#) site.

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Content Last Updated: 10/13/2004