

Lyons on Wheels

by Dan Lyons • *Special to The Daily Gazette*

2022 Ford F-150 Lightning

MSRP: \$46,974 (Pro) As Tested: \$80,589 (Lariat Extended Range)



The Lightning badge was formerly found on a high performance version of the F-150. The new Lightning is a fine performer, but it's the power source - not the power - that's making the news. Ford has reassigned the name to a brand new, electric powered version of its perennially popular pickup. Gas powered F-150's remain the company's core offering, with a wide variety of choices (engine, bed size, cab size...) to tailor the truck to the buyer's needs. But, Lightning

points the way to an increasingly electric future for Ford.

Lightning is sold in four versions. Pro (MSRP: \$39,974), XLT (\$52,974), Lariat (\$67,474) and Platinum (\$90,874). The standard battery pack will take you an estimated 230 miles on a full charge. An extended range battery (standard on Platinum, optional on XLT and Lariat) stretches that to 300 (Platinum), 320 (XLT, Lariat).

All versions are All Wheel Drive, with two, electric motors. With the standard battery pack, the system is rated at 452 horsepower and 775 lb.-ft. of torque. The extended range battery bumps the output up to 580 h.p. and 775 lb.-ft. As those numbers suggest, performance is eye-opening. Big battery pack models like my test truck can post 0-60 times in the low four second range. And while Lightning isn't a sports car, with beefy tires and it's battery pack weight worn low, it handles better than you'd expect, given its height. Ride quality is comfortable throughout.

Unlike other F-150's, Lightning is mono spec. All trims are outfitted with a small box (5.5') and a big cabin (Crew). Maximum payload ranges from 1,952 - 2,235 lb. Towing –



Photos courtesy of the manufacturer

with the Max Trailer Tow Package (\$825) - is 7,700 lb. in standard battery models; 8,500 lb. in Platinum, and 10,000 lb. in XLT/Lariat (extended batteries). Cargo box volume is 52.8 cubic-feet, but Lightning also packs a surprise. Since there's no engine under the hood, that space was repurposed for storage, and re-christened as a "frunk". It has a storage capacity of 14.1 cu.-ft. (400 lbs.), has four, 120v outlets, and is water resistant and drainable.

Crew Cab interiors are exceptionally roomy in both rows. The biggest difference in the cabin between Lightning and other F-150's is the supersized infotainment screen in center dash. The vertically oriented touchscreen is 12" on Pro and XLT, and 15" on Lariat and Platinum. I found the supersized, 15" display on my test truck to be easy to read and reach, but slower to operate than the conventional mixture of buttons, switches and dials, that most truck owners are used to.

With the provided cord, you can charge up with standard, household current (120 volts), but it's a slow feed (about two miles per average charging hour). Included with the extended battery is an 80 amp charger (the Charge Station Pro, which requires an electrician to install), and will provide about 30 miles per charging hour. Most drivers should find this a very workable arrangement. Long trips are more challenging. DC Fast charging stations can give you about 50 miles of range with a 10 minute charge, but if you're not on the thruway or a major highway, access to these chargers can be scarce.

Overall, Lightning is a versatile vehicle with impressive technology. Demand has outstripped supply for the time being, so prospective buyers will need to contact their dealer, to get in line. The silver lining to that may be this. The grid of chargers grows larger every day, making long distance travel more practical for all electric vehicles.



A 40 year resident of the Capital District, Dan Lyons is the author of six automotive books, and photographer of more than 200 calendars.