Dc car charger

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Charging networks like Electrify America, EVGo and Tesla's Superchargers allow drivers to quickly recharge and get back on the road.

The first thing you'll want to know is what DC fast charging connector type your electric car uses. This will dictate, for the most part, what type of fast charging stations you'll have access to. For most non-Tesla EVs, you're most likely looking at a Combined Charging System, or CCS port that you can connect to networks like Electrify America (EA) or EVGo. Meanwhile, Tesla cars use their own North American Charging Standard (NACS) port that works with its Supercharger network.

Recently, Tesla has opened its charging standard and a portion of the Supercharging network to EVs outside of its brand. This led a wave of automakers (and even one electric motorcycle builder) to announce compatibility via an adapter with many going as far as announcing plans to outright switch to Tesla's NACS port in their future EVs -- something to keep in mind over the next few years.

Ford was the first of a wave of automakers to announce adoption of Tesla's NACS connector and charging standard.

Additionally, there's a third DC fast charging standard to be aware of, ye olde ChaDeMo connection. Today, the chunky port is only found on the aging Nissan Leaf EV and, when that model is phased out over the next few years, ChaDeMo will leave with it.

The next thing you'll want to suss out is the charging rate supported by your EV's onboard charger. Every electric car has a sort of electronic speed limit, measured in kilowatts, that dictates how quickly its battery pack can absorb energy from a DC fast charging station. This number isn't constant across the entire state of charge -- it's more of a charging curve that varies based on multiple factors -- but that's OK. All you really need to know is the theoretical maximum charging speed, which will dictate what stations will deliver an optimal charging experience close to what the automaker advertises.

For example, in order to take advantage of the fastest 225 kW charging on the Porsche Taycan to zip from 10% to 80% in 21 minutes or the Kia EV6's 233 kW 18-minute charge, you'll need to connect to a charging station that can reach their maximum speed. That means looking for a 350 kW EVGo or EA station. Charging at a 150 kW plug will add minutes to your charging time -- though, in practice not so much that I'd avoid them.

Most EVs on the market tend to hang out in the 120 to 150 kW sweet spot where most of the network chargers also happen to live. However, some older or cheaper EVs may charge more slowly. The Chevrolet Bolt -- the cheapest EV you can buy today -- has a maximum DC charging rate of around 55 kW, which is essentially the

minimum to be considered "fast charging." Almost any station on the grid will saturate that 1 hour 10-80% speed, so there's no benefit to seeking a faster 350 kW plug.

You'll notice that I'm giving 10-80% charging times rather than 0-100%. That's for two reasons. First, ideally you'll never find yourself coasting into a charging station with a totally flat battery. Also, as I mentioned, the charging rate for most EVs varies across the state of charge and, for most cars, charging outside of the 10-80% sweet spot is significantly slower.

An EV that takes 30 minutes to charge to 80% may take up to an additional hour to reach 100%. That's why many automakers and most charging station operators recommend getting back on the road at 80% as the most efficient use of your time.

Now that you know what connector your car uses and what charging speeds to look for, you have what you need to search for and filter DC fast charging stations along your route. This can sometimes be done with the software built into your electric car's dashboard, with the most advanced systems able to automatically plan and suggest routes based on your destination and driving habits and the best of them offering live info about the charger's status and availability.

Tesla, for example, is able to offer a deep level of integration between its vehicles and Supercharger network, giving its drivers the confidence to just hit the road and trust the car and the network to coordinate to let them know when and where to charge. Mercedes-Benz also offers detailed live charger data, but the consistency of that data can vary across the multiple charging networks it supports.

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Web: https://www.kary.com.pl/contact-us/
Email: energystorage2000@gmail.com
WhatsApp: 8613816583346