

Mercedes to build its own electric vehicle charging network

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A ChargePoint electric vehicle charging hub, center, is on display at the Mercedes-Benz booth during the CES tech show Thursday, Jan. 5, 2023, in Las Vegas. Mercedes-Benz says it will build its own worldwide electric vehicle charging network starting in North America in a bid to compete with EV sales leader Tesla. Credit: AP Photo/John Locher

Mercedes-Benz says it will build its own worldwide electric vehicle charging network starting in North America in a bid to compete with EV sales leader Tesla.

The German luxury automaker said at the CES gadget show in Las Vegas Thursday that it will start building the North American network this year at a total cost of just over 1 billion euros (\$1.05 billion). When completed in six or seven years, the network will have 400 charging stations with more than 2,500 high-power plugs, the company said.

Networks in Europe and China and other markets will follow, with completion of the full network by the end of the decade, when the company intends to sell all electric vehicles depending on market conditions. The full network will have more than 2,000 charging stations and over 10,000 plugs worldwide, Ola Källenius, chairman of Mercedes-Benz's management board, told reporters.

The company said the Mercedes-branded network will be open to owners of all electric vehicles, but Mercedes owners will be able to reserve charging ports and get preference over other makes.

The move will help the company compete with Tesla, which says on its website that it has 40,000 charging ports worldwide. Tesla's network is mostly for exclusive use of Tesla owners, although CEO Elon Musk has said there are plans to open it to other brands. The network gives Tesla a competitive advantage over other EV brands, which have to rely on a patchwork of network of privately owned charging stations.



The Mercedes Benz logo is pictured in Berlin, Germany, June 25, 2021. Mercedes-Benz says it will build its own worldwide electric vehicle charging network starting in North America in a bid to compete with EV sales leader Tesla. Credit: AP Photo/Michael Sohn, File

Each Mercedes station will have four to 12 ports with up to 350 kilowatts of charging power. Mercedes will share the cost of the North American network equally with MN8 Energy, a large solar energy and battery storage operator in the U.S. EV charging network provider ChargePoint also is a partner.

The network will address customer concerns about not having enough range to get to their destination, and finding a working charging [station](#), said Markus Schäfer, Mercedes' [chief technology officer](#).

While other charging networks are being developed, "We thought we had to go further and take the initiative here and create our branded global Mercedes-Benz [network](#)," Schäfer said.

The charging hubs will be built in key cities and population centers, close to major roads and near retail businesses and restaurants. Some will be at participating Mercedes dealerships, the [company](#) said. "We know where our customers are in North America, we know where we're selling [electric vehicles](#)," Schäfer said.

The stations will be in safe, well-lighted locations, Schäfer said, "not in the backyard somewhere of a shopping center next to a dumpster."

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