The Come-To-You Charge

Dispatch economics, route density, and the operating discipline of same-day mobile EV charging

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Foreword

The public charging network keeps growing — the United States passed 250,000 public charging ports in 2026, including roughly 73,900 DC fast-charging ports as of June — and yet drivers still run low in exactly the places a charger isn't. That gap between where the grid is and where the driver is stranded is the entire reason mobile charging exists. This handbook is about the operating discipline required to close that gap profitably, again and again, one dispatch at a time.

Everything here is grounded in the reality of same-day service as it stands in 2026. We wrote the book we wish we'd had before our first eight-hour shift: honest about the math, specific about the logistics, and clear that in this business the electricity is the easy part.

Read it once end to end, then keep it in the cab. The checklists at the end of each chapter are meant to be argued with and adapted to your own service area.

Chapter 1 — Charging Is Logistics, Not Electricity

New operators assume the hard part of mobile EV charging is the power. It isn't. Delivering electrons into a battery is well-understood engineering. The hard part is being in the right place at the right time, with enough charge on board, at a cost that leaves margin. Mobile charging is a logistics business wearing an energy-business costume.

Every unit that arrives fast and leaves productive is a win; every unit stuck in traffic between low-value stops is bleeding money. Reframe the whole operation around time and position, and the decisions get clearer. You are not selling kilowatt-hours. You are selling the collapse of the distance between a low battery and a working one.

Measure yourself in charges completed per shift and drive-time between stops, not raw energy dispensed.

Field Checklist

- Treat the business as logistics first, energy second
- Track charges per shift and inter-stop drive time
- Optimize for position and timing, not raw kWh

Chapter 2 — The 20-Minute Top-Off as a Product

Not every customer needs a full charge, and pretending they do is a route-killer. The express top-off — enough range to end the anxiety and get the driver where they're going — is the product that makes same-day economics work. A short, reliable top-off lets one unit serve many customers in a shift; a full charge-to-100 ties a unit to a single stop for an hour it can't afford.

Package it clearly. A predictable "we top you off in about twenty minutes and you're moving" promise is easier to sell, dispatch, and price than an open-ended "we'll charge you up." Customers overwhelmingly want to stop worrying, not to sit and wait for a full tank they don't need right now.

Design the flagship offer around the smallest useful charge delivered fastest, and let full charges be the exception, priced accordingly.

Field Checklist

- Make the express top-off your flagship product
- Price and dispatch full charges as premium exceptions
- Sell the end of range anxiety, not a full battery

Chapter 3 — Dispatch and Route Density

Route density is destiny. A shift with stops clustered tightly is profitable; the same number of stops scattered across a metro is not. The single most valuable skill in this business is turning a stream of incoming requests into a sequence that minimizes dead miles — the drive-time between paying stops

where the meter of your costs runs but the meter of your revenue does not.

We once routed 47 charges in a single eight-hour shift in Long Beach, and the lesson was not that we charged fast — it was that we sequenced ruthlessly and worked a dense corridor. Peak-demand patterns are predictable: workplaces mid-morning, residential in the evening. Pre-positioning a unit near where the next wave of demand will land beats reacting to it after the fact.

Build dispatch to cluster, batch, and pre-position. Guard your dead-mile ratio the way a restaurant guards food cost.

Field Checklist

- Cluster stops to maximize route density
- Pre-position units ahead of predictable demand waves
- Track and minimize dead-mile ratio per shift

Chapter 4 — Fleets Buy Uptime, Not Kilowatt-Hours

Consumer top-offs are the visible business; fleets are the durable one. A commercial fleet — delivery vans, rideshare drivers, service vehicles — measures a dead battery in lost revenue per hour, and that math makes mobile charging an easy purchase. Surveys in 2026 report that around 62% of fleet operators express interest in mobile charging specifically to cut vehicle downtime, which is exactly the same-day dispatch model this business runs.

Selling to fleets means selling reliability and reporting, not price per kWh. Coordinated dispatch across multiple vehicles, bulk billing, predictable scheduling, and maintenance-style reporting are what a fleet manager actually buys. The recurring contract smooths the lumpiness of consumer demand and turns a reactive business into a plannable one.

Anchor the business with fleet accounts. They provide the base load of demand that makes route density achievable every day.

Field Checklist

- Pursue fleet contracts as the recurring revenue base
- Sell uptime and reporting, not price per kWh
- Use fleet demand to stabilize daily route density

Chapter 5 — Roadside and the Rescue Economy

The stranded driver is the most urgent customer in EV ownership, and mobile charging is uniquely positioned to serve them. As mobile charging matures, it is increasingly recognized within roadside-assistance frameworks — a rescue category alongside the tow truck and the jump start. The value to a driver stuck on the shoulder with a dead battery is enormous, and that urgency supports premium pricing.

But rescue work is operationally demanding. It is unpredictable by nature, it pulls a unit out of a dense route to a scattered emergency, and it demands fast response to be worth anything. The operators who do it well treat it as a distinct service line with its own pricing and its own capacity, rather than

letting emergencies randomly wreck an otherwise optimized shift.

Offer roadside rescue deliberately, price it for the urgency it carries, and protect your scheduled routes from being derailed by it.

Field Checklist

- Run roadside rescue as a distinct, premium service line
- Price emergency dispatch for its urgency and disruption
- Reserve capacity so rescues don't wreck scheduled routes

Chapter 6 — Safety, Compliance, and Trust

Handling high-power charging in uncontrolled environments — parking lots, curbsides, roadsides — puts safety and compliance at the center of the business. Proper equipment handling, connector care, weather and thermal awareness, and clear protocols are not bureaucracy; they are what keep a mobile operation from becoming a liability event. In a business built on showing up in someone's driveway or fleet yard, trust is the product beneath the product.

Compliance is also increasingly a market signal. As regulators and roadside-assistance frameworks formalize mobile charging's status, operators who can point to approved, above-board practice win the contracts that matter — especially with fleets and institutions that cannot afford to work with an operator who cuts corners.

Build a documented safety practice early, and treat regulatory legitimacy as a competitive asset, not a cost.

Field Checklist

- Document equipment-handling and safety protocols
- Train for weather, thermal, and connector safety
- Use regulatory legitimacy as a trust and sales asset

Chapter 7 — The Unit Economics of Mobile Charging

The mobile EV charging market is projected to reach roughly $56 million in 2026 and to grow at about a 32.6% compound annual rate into the early 2030s — a small but fast-scaling segment where early operators can establish position. But market growth does not guarantee individual profitability. That comes down to unit economics: revenue per charge, charges per shift, energy and vehicle costs, labor, and the dead-mile drag that quietly eats margin.

The levers are few and knowable. Raise charges-per-shift through density. Raise revenue-per-charge through fleet contracts and premium rescue. Lower cost-per-charge through route discipline and reliable equipment. An operator who can recite these numbers for their own service area is running a business; one who can't is running a hobby that happens to own chargers.

Know your numbers cold, reinvest margin into coverage and units, and let disciplined economics — not growth headlines — decide how you scale.

Field Checklist

- Track revenue, cost, and charges-per-shift per unit
- Improve density and fleet mix to lift margin
- Scale on unit economics, not market hype

Conclusion: The Business of Being There

Mobile EV charging is not, in the end, about electricity. It is about presence — being there, fast, where the driver is, and doing it at a cost that leaves margin. The public network will keep expanding, but it will never eliminate the moment when a battery runs low in the wrong place. That gap is permanent, and serving it well is a real business.

The operators who win in 2026 and beyond are the boring ones: the ones who guard their dead-mile ratio, anchor their week with fleet contracts, package the express top-off cleanly, run roadside as its own disciplined line, and can recite their unit economics from memory. Nothing dramatic happens on their shifts because the drama was designed out in advance.

Build the dense route. Sign the fleets. Know the numbers. Show up fast and leave productive. Do that consistently and the come-to-you charge stops being a novelty and becomes what it should be: the reliable answer to a problem the fixed grid can never fully solve.

References

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