

Interstate Batteries Frequently Asked Questions Regarding Batteries

What is the best *in-season* maintenance that I can provide for my battery?

- Always keeping your battery fully charged and keeping the water levels up. After usage charge the battery as soon as possible and check your water levels after charging. If needed add water before charging, but regular water maintenance consists of adding water after charging. Distilled water is the best to use, and fill until you are covering all the lead.

What is the best *off-season* maintenance that I can provide for my battery?

- Keeping your battery in a full state of charge all off-season is the sole maintenance required. If you do not have an on-board charger that is automatic (meaning that it will maintain your batteries by turning on and off automatically as needed all off-season), you need to use a battery maintainer that you leave on your battery **all** off season. These are designed to provide a low amp charge as soon as the battery voltage drops, and as soon as it recognizes the battery is fully charged it turns the charge off and goes back to sensing voltage. One that we highly recommend and sell is the Deltran Battery Tender Jr.

Can I leave my battery on a 1-2amp charge all winter to keep it full?

- No, this will overcharge your battery. It needs to be an automatic charger that will turn off and on when needed. Leaving a slow charge on a battery all the time is like leaving something in the oven at a lower temperature when done cooking, it will still overcook.

Should I add acid or water to my battery if fluid levels are low?

- You should NEVER be adding battery acid to a battery, unless filling a dry battery for the first time. During charging, acid is not leaving your battery, only water. This is due to the battery heating up during charging allowing some of the water to evaporate. The higher amp of charge being used, the more water you will be losing. Therefore, the more you are using your batteries, the more often you will need to be checking your water levels.

Is an AGM (Absorbed Glass Mat) Battery better than a Lead Acid Battery?

- This all depends on what the user is looking for. AGM's are very powerful batteries, and in the overall scheme of things a more superior battery than a lead acid. They are built to last for more cycles overall, meaning you should be getting longer life out of them vs. a lead acid. For cranking applications the cranking power is drastically higher. Most of the time an 800CCA AGM battery will actually test 1100-1200CCA. In a deep cycle application the cranking power is still drastically higher (even though we are not concerned with cranking power so much), but our RC (reserve capacity) is actually lower. For example a group 29 lead acid will have a 210 RC, meanwhile an identical size AGM will only have about 150-160 RC. Most people are not aware of this drop in run time when switching to an AGM battery.

AGM batteries are a little less forgiving overall, they need to be charged via a specific AGM charger, and they do not like to be discharged severely. If discharged so severely (close to totally dead), the battery is most likely going to be damaged, or may never come back. However, a big benefit to AGM is that you never have to check water levels. If you have a battery(ies) in a compartment that are difficult to provide maintenance to during the season (checking water levels), you will most likely want to go with AGMs. Another reason to go with AGM is if the battery is in a sealed room/ compartment where people are. Lead acid batteries give off fumes while in use and while charging that are harmful if inhaled in concentrated amounts.

Each battery has its pros and cons, you just have to decide what will best suit your needs and setup. Bear in mind, AGM batteries are usually about twice the cost as well.

What sized deep cycle battery should I get?

- The larger the battery, the longer the run time. You can figure out how much battery you need by finding out how many amps your trolling motor is using. Reserve Capacity is the most common rating used for a battery's run time. It states: @25 amp discharge the battery will last for X minutes before reaching 10.5 volts. For example, if your trolling motor is drawing 25 amps from the battery on its highest setting; you will get roughly 140 minutes of use out of the battery. Higher amp draw means discharging quicker and vice versa.

I have a 24V system, with two 12 volt batteries hooked together is my run time doubling?

- No, your run time only increases when you keep voltage the same (running in parallel). Doubling your voltage keeps your run

time the same (with identical batteries), or your run time will be only as long as your weakest battery out of the two used.

What is the best way to tell what state of charge my battery is in, or if I have any bad cells?

- A hydrometer is the simplest and most effective way to test a batteries state of charge, as well as seeing if you have any bad cells. All cells should be exactly level, if you are getting a reading consisting of one or more cells uneven, you have a bad battery. A full state of charge means that your cells should be reading close to or above 1280. Here is a link to a video that shows how to use a hydrometer: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WWzC_yaMHkE