

BATTERY HEALTH

The battery is the heart of your electrical system and before installing any new electrical components you should check your battery. The vehicle must have a good, fully charged battery for the electrical system to operate properly.

- A. Using a digital voltmeter, the voltage reading *MUST* be 12.43 Volts or higher
- B. If your battery is over 3 years old, it should be replaced.
- C. If your battery has been discharged 3 times or more, it is sulfated and *MUST* be replaced! NOTE: A sulfate damaged battery will not:
 - accept a charge and may damage your charging system, nor
 - provide sufficient voltage and / or current to turn the starter motor.
- D. Make sure the positive and negative cables are free of corrosion, and have a clean tight fit.
- E. Apply dielectric grease to the battery terminals to protect the terminals from corrosion.

Refer to the following table with current battery health and our recommended actions:

| Battery Voltage | State of Charge / Battery Condition | Recommended Action |
|-----------------|-------------------------------------|-------------------------|
| 12.7 V | 100 % | |
| 12.6 V | 90% | |
| 12.4 V | 75 % | Charge Battery + retest |
| 12.2 V | 50 % | Replace Battery |
| 12.0 V | 25 % | Replace Battery |
| 11.9 V or less | Discharged | Replace Battery |

BATTERY TESTING

Battery Testing can be done in more than one way. The most popular is measurement of specific gravity and battery voltage. To measure specific gravity, buy a temperature compensating hydrometer. To measure battery voltage, use a digital D.C. Voltmeter. A good digital load tester may be a good purchase if you need to continually test batteries, especially sealed batteries.

You must first have the battery fully charged. The surface charge must be removed before testing. If the battery has been sitting at least several hours (preferably at least 12 hours) you may begin testing. To remove surface charge the battery must experience a load of 20 amps for 3 plus minutes. Turning on the headlights (high beam) will do the trick. After turning off the lights you are ready to test the battery.

*Sulfation of Batteries starts when specific gravity falls below 1.225 or voltage measures less than 12.4 (12v Battery). Sulfation hardens the battery plates reducing and eventually destroying the ability of the battery to generate Volts and Amps.

Load testing is yet another way of testing a battery. Load test removes amps from a battery much like starting an engine would. A load tester can be purchased at most auto parts stores. Some battery companies label their battery with the amp load for testing. This number is usually 1/2 of the CCA rating. For instance, a 500CCA battery would load test at 250 amps for 15 seconds. A load test can only be performed if the battery is near or at full charge.

The results of your testing should be as follows:

Hydrometer readings should not vary more than .05 differences between cells.

Digital Voltmeters should read as the voltage shown on the reverse side of this document. The sealed AGM and Gel-Cell battery voltage (full charged) will be slightly higher in the 12.8 to 12.9 ranges. If you have voltage readings in the 10.5 volts range on a charged battery, that indicates a shorted cell.

If you have a maintenance free wet cell, the only ways to test are voltmeter and load test. Some of the maintenance free batteries have a built-in hydrometer that tells you the condition of 1 cell of 6. You may get a good reading from 1 cell but have a problem with other cells in the battery.