Modern Automotive Technology
Chapter 29

Automotive Batteries
Learning Objectives

- Describe safety practices when testing and servicing a battery
- Visually inspect a battery for problems
- Perform battery tests
- Clean the battery case and terminals
- Jump start a car using a second battery
- Replace a defective battery
Battery Parts

- Negative terminal or post
- Positive terminal or post
- Case
- Strap or cell connector
- Cell divider
- Element or cell

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Battery Functions

- Operate the starter, ignition, and fuel injection during cranking
- Supply electrical power when the engine is not running
- Supply electrical power when current demands exceed alternator output
- Act as a capacitor (stabilize voltage)
- Store energy for extended periods
Discharging
- Changes chemical energy into electrical energy
- Stored energy is released

Charging
- Electrical energy is converted to chemical energy
- Energy is stored until needed

Battery Cycling
- Repeated charging and discharging
- Deep cycling
  - going from a very low charge to full charge
  - can shorten service life
Chapter 29

1. **LEAD STRAPS** run along the upper portion of the case to connect the plates.

2. A **BATTER CELL** consists of a negative plate, positive plate, container, and electrolyte.
Battery Element

Most automotive batteries have six elements
Electrolyte causes a chemical reaction between the plates, producing 2.1 volts.
Electrolyte

- Mixture of sulfuric acid and distilled water
- Poured into each cell until plates are covered

**Warning:** Electrolyte will cause serious burns or blindness, if it comes in contact with your skin or eyes!
Chapter 29

3. A BATTERY ELEMENT makes up of positive plates, negative plates, straps, and separators.

4. A MAINTENANCE FREE BATTERY does not have removable filler caps.
Battery Terminals

Means of connecting the battery to the vehicle’s electrical system
Electrolyte

Acid should just touch the split ring in the top of the case.
Chapter 29

5. **RESERVE CAPACITY RATING** is the time needed to lower battery terminal voltage below 10.2 volts at a discharge rate of 25 amps.

6. The **CHARGE INDICATOR** provides an easy way to check battery condition.
Battery Ratings

- **Cold cranking rating:** Determines the current that the battery can deliver for 30 seconds at 0 °F while maintaining terminal voltage of 7.2 volts (or 1.2 volts per cell). Expressed as cold cranking amps (CCA)

- **Reserve capacity rating:** Time needed to lower battery terminal voltage below 10.2 volts (1.7 volts per cell) at a discharge rate of 25 amperes at 80 °F (27 °C). Expressed in minutes

- **Amp-hour rating:** Measures current that the battery could produce for 20 hours at 80 °F with the battery voltage above 10.5 volts
Charge Indicator

Changes color to show the general state of charge of the battery.
Battery Voltage

- Open circuit cell voltage is 2.1 volts
- Cells are connected in series
- Battery voltage depends on the number of cells
- 12 volt battery has 6 cells - open circuit voltage 12.6 volts
- 6 volt battery has 3 cells - open circuit voltage 6.3 volts
Battery Voltage

Three 2.1-V cells = 6.3 V

Six 2.1-V cells = 12.6 V

Three cells produce 6-volt battery

Six cells produce 12-volt battery
Battery Cables

A. Post-type
B. Side terminal
C. Braided ground
D. 90° post-type
E. Solenoid to starter
Cable Connections

Negative grounds engine block and positive connects to electrical system
Battery Tray and Retainer

Holds battery securely in place
May house a battery temperature sensor
Battery Tray and Heat Shield

Protects battery from excess engine heat by routing air between heat shield and battery case.
Chapter 29

7. **DISCHARGING** is when chemical energy is changed into electrical energy in the battery.

8. **ELECTROLYTE** is a mixture of sulfuric acid and distilled water.
9. **COLD CRANKING RATING** indicates the battery's ability to crank a specific engine at a specified temperature.

10. **CHARGING** takes place when electrical energy is converted into chemical energy.
Temperature Versus Efficiency

Starting power available from battery

100%  80°
65%   32°
40%   0°
18%  -20°

Starting power required by engine

100%  155%
210%
268%

Temperature (°F) -18°C
Parasitic Loads

- Current draw present when engine and ignition are shut off
- Computers and clock require constant power
- Over prolonged periods, these may discharge the battery enough to prevent starting
Identify the Parts of a Battery

11. Increased electrolyte capacity
12. Battery cap
13. Sealed vent caps
14. Test eye indicator
15. Terminal (post type)
16. Battery case
17. Battery hold down
18. Cell divider
19. Element
20. Cell compartments