

Professional Auto Care

November and December 2007 Newsletter

Announcements:

- Happy Holidays from everyone here at Professional Auto Care. Please note we will be closed the 21st, 22nd, and 23rd of November for Thanksgiving Break and from December 21st until January 2nd for Christmas Break.
- Be sure to check out our websites www.ProfessionalAutoCare.net and www.HoustonTexasCars.com. [ProfessionalAutoCare.net](http://www.ProfessionalAutoCare.net) will have a battery check list as an extension for this month's newsletter.
- Remember we are your one stop shop, with our state inspection center, alignment center, body shop, and car sales department. Also keep in mind when you refer someone to our shop you'll receive a free oil change voucher in the mail.
- AAA Texas members receive a discount at Professional Auto Care just by showing their membership card when they drop off their vehicles.
- Come in for a free battery inspection and battery test!

Things You Auto Know: Start Me Up

Are car batteries today different from, say, 15 years ago?

It's not so much that batteries are different, but the demands placed on them are greater. Before, a battery was needed mainly to start a car. Now it also supplies energy for the computers that help operate the engine, brakes, and transmission; the heating, ventilation, air-conditioning system; the clock, the radio/CD player, DVD player, and navigation system; and so on. So it's important to keep your car's battery healthy for as long as possible.

How do I do that?

Look your battery over every couple of months, and pay attention to the five things that reduce battery life: corrosion, vibration, lack of use, extreme temperatures, and low water levels.

Can I service my car's battery myself?

Generally, I don't recommend that the average person disconnect a battery or jump-start a car—especially a newer car. You should leave those jobs to the pros. However, if you choose to jump-start a car yourself, use care and follow the manufacturer's instructions in the vehicle's owner's manual. Here's why: First, if you disconnect your car's battery to clean the terminal, you might cause problems with the car. That's because a car's electronics—the computers, the clock, the radio, and so on—are in continuous operation and depend on current from the battery. When you disconnect the battery, you'll lose the clock time and radio-channel settings. You can reset the clock time easily enough. But some radios require you to punch in a code before they'll work, so a dealer might have to reset yours.

How do I know when I need a new battery?

Unfortunately, today's batteries don't usually give warning signs before they fail. Your best guide is the battery's age. The average life of a passenger-vehicle battery in Texas is 42-46 months, so when the battery is three to four years old, have it tested at a repair facility you trust. They'll be able to give you a score indicating what percentage of its life is left. Thirty percent is about where you should draw the line and replace the battery. Below that, batteries are prone to sudden failure.

How do I know what kind of replacement battery to buy?

Get one with the correct specifications and physical dimensions; your vehicle's owner's manual should provide the information. Or get a recommendation from the person who services your car. Generally, there's no advantage in buying a more powerful battery, unless you drive in extreme conditions, such as very cold weather.

What does the future hold for car batteries?

Automotive electrical systems are becoming increasingly complex. For instance, in the near future, some high-end carmakers might go to a 42-volt system instead of the current 12-volt system because of all the accessories and electronics they're installing in their cars. Systems this large will require multiple batteries connected to each other and located in various places throughout the car, such as in door panels, under seats, in the trunk, and in the fender wells. And with that kind of system, customers won't even be able to get the batteries, let alone jump them or service them.

Source: "Start Me Up" from the Texas Journey Magazine, March/April 2006