

No:	SB200-20		
Date:	20/04/20	Issue:	1

Subject:	Prolonged Parked Vehicle Battery Care
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Due to COVID-19 many vehicles are currently parked up, this bulletin explains about prolonged parking of vehicles with regards to battery care.

Parasitic Drain

Prolonged parking of vehicles can cause the batteries to drain in power from parasitic drain.

A parasitic drain is an electrical load that draws current from the battery when the ignition is turned off. Components often draw a few mA (milliamps) because of something called KAM. (Keep Alive Memory). It could be a radio, clock, Tachograph etc. induced current from these items will typically only add up to 20 or 30 mA at most. That means the vehicle can sit parked for days without any problems of excessive battery drain that might prevent starting. However, it is recommended the engine is started periodically and the truck is left running for 15 minutes so the alternator can recharge the batteries.

If batteries drop below 80% of their rated voltage it can lead to permanent damage.

If you are not able to start vehicles up to recharge the batteries it is recommended you disconnect the batteries in a fully charged state.

The table below shows how long it will take to run 120 Ah batteries down to 80% of charge

Current draw in mA	Time hrs	Charge state
10	100	80%
20	50	80%
30	33.3	80%
40	25	80%
500	20	80%
100	10	80%
500	3	80%

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WARNINGS:

EXPLOSION HAZARD! BATTERIES PRODUCE AN EXPLOSIVE GAS MIXTURE, KEEP SOURCES OF HEAT, SPARKS AND NAKED FLAMES AWAY FROM THE VEHICLE BATTERIES. DO NOT GENERATE SPARKS WHEN REMOVING OR ATTACHING ELECTRICAL CONSUMERS OR MEASURING DEVICES DIRECTLY ONTO BATTERY TERMINALS.

CORROSION HAZARD! BATTERIES CONTAIN CORROSIVE ACID

- **WEAR SAFETY GOGGLES AND PROTECTIVE EQUIPMENT**
- **WHEN HANDLING BATTERIES MAKE SURE THEY REMAIN LEVEL TO PREVENT SPILLAGE**
- **LEAVE THE CAPS IN POSITION**
- **IF BATTERY ACID COMES INTO CONTACT WITH SKIN OR EYES, WASH IMMEDIATELY WITH COLD WATER AND SEEK MEDICAL ADVICE.**

Non starting vehicle

If a vehicle will not start it is recommended the batteries are removed and trickle charged back up to their fully charged state, follow the battery removal/fitting procedure in the Repair and Maintenance Manual before commencing.

Jump Starting

Jump starting should only be done as a last resort!

Follow instructions from the Repair and Maintenance manual before carrying out jump starting.

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Battery equalisation

When fitting batteries old or new they both need to be the same voltage (tolerance 0.1 volt), it is advised to use a battery equalising charger on the batteries before connecting to the vehicle, see Fig.1 below shows an example of a battery equaliser.

Failure to do this can cause an imbalance of the batteries during normal vehicle charging, this will make one battery work harder than the other causing internal damage.

Fig. 1

