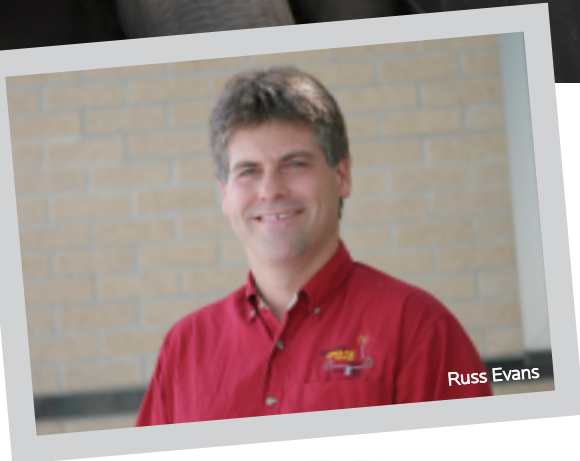


MAINTENANCE



Russ Evans

BATTERIES

Chris from Sioux Falls wrote in with some battery questions and asking if I could write about them in The Motor Market.

Well Chris, I am happy to help you with your questions. Here is some information about batteries and their care.

You all know that every car has a battery in it, and that when the car stops turning over when it is time to go somewhere, it is time for a new one, right? That may have been true before cars were equipped with computers and the other high tech convenience features we have today, but much has changed.

In 1980 batteries were there to turn the car over and once running the alternator took over to run the vehicle accessories which were few. You could have a very weak battery but as long as the engine turned over enough to fire you were good to go.

Today's cars are much more dependant on their batteries. A battery in a vehicle built from about 1995 and newer must handle many jobs. The battery is first a power storage device responsible for supplying the cranking voltage, but once started it must do much more. It needs to be able to store excess voltage under light load conditions, supply extra voltage during high load conditions, and filter a/c voltage



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(noise) from the charging system. Did you know that a failing battery can cause a car to not shift gears correctly or even cause it to get poor fuel mileage? A battery can cause these issues and many more.

Batteries tend to fail more in the winter because the demand placed on them by the cold weather really shows the batteries condition. In fact, batteries are broken down by the summer heat and only show their condition in the winter.

Batteries usually will last for about three to 5 years with good care. If they are run dead even once their reserve capacity will be cut in half. This means if you forget to turn your lights off it will take only half as long for the battery to be low enough for the car to not start, in winter even less.

How can you make sure your battery will be there when you need it?

Avoid running the battery dead by leaving something on. This is the biggest thing you can do to save a battery.

Next, have your battery and charging system inspected once a year. The terminals on today's batteries don't often get dirty so if they do they are usually leaking and the battery may test bad.

If the battery does test bad or very weak replace it. If you think it is good just because the vehicle still turns over it may leave you stranded when you need it most.

Thanks for writing in Chris.

If you have a question about car care or want to know how something works, then send your questions to help@underthehoodshow.com, we may write about it in The Motor Market. ^{TMM}

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