

RV Maintenance Made Easy: 12-Volt Battery System



| How to Upkeep Your RV's 12-Volt Battery System

Here are a few troubleshooting and maintenance tips to help increase the longevity and efficiency of your RV's 12-volt battery system.

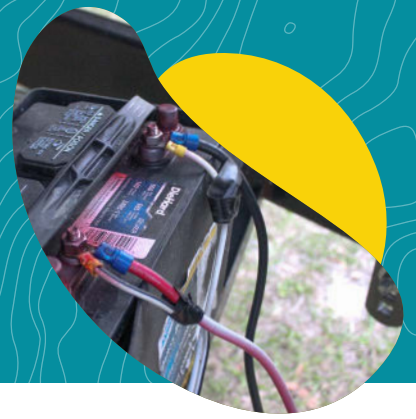
| 12-Volt Battery Maintenance and Troubleshooting Tips

These next tips are for the 12-volt battery system in the RV and specifically those with lead acid batteries. The coach batteries are the “brains” of just about all of the important systems in the RV, including lights, slide-outs, leveling jacks, the water pump, vent fans, the water heater ignitor, the furnace fan, refrigerator control panels, and your thermostat.

| Preventative Maintenance

- A fully charged 12-volt battery will read 12.6 volts; a 75 percent charged battery will read 12.4 volts; and a 50 percent charged battery will read 12 volts. To extend the life of your lead acid battery, avoid letting it get below 50 percent. If you don't have a monitor panel with exact voltage readings inside the coach, invest in a **multimeter** so you can read your battery levels.
- Check the battery periodically for signs of corrosion, keep it cleaned, and check the cable connections to ensure they're tight.
- If you have a serviceable lead acid battery, monitor the water levels in the battery fill wells, and if they need topping off, use distilled water.
- These batteries can self-discharge up to 1 volt per month. Keeping the voltage reading above 50 percent will extend battery life. Keep your battery plugged in and charging. If you don't have that option or are storing your battery, you can use a battery charger or **12-volt solar charger**.

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| Troubleshooting

- Get a clear understanding of which items are powered by your 12-volt battery system in your coach and make a list to keep handy for troubleshooting.
- If you find 12-volt items that are not operative in the RV, start with the basics and check the voltage.
- Another simple fix might be a 12-volt fuse. You can find the 12-volt fuse panel in the electrical panel on the interior of your RV. Keep a supply of extra **fuses** in case one is blown.
- Call a professional for both 12-volt and 120-volt electrical repair needs to ensure they are performed safely, and to avoid creating a dangerous “hot skin” situation that could result in electric shock.



Slide-outs and electric jacks require a fully charged battery to operate properly. When available, plug your RV into shore power to allow the 12-volt converter to “assist” the battery with these heavier loads.