

Love Your Battery!!

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One of the most common causes of a “no start” issue with our Porsches is a problem with the battery, especially when the weather gets warm... okay HOT. Like any other part of your Porsche, the battery requires regular maintenance and care.

There are five main areas that require maintenance:

1. **Water Level.** If your battery has removable vent caps, then the water level can be checked and topped off using distilled water only. A low water level is very hard on the battery and prevents the battery from charging fully.
2. **Terminals.** The battery terminals must be clean and free of corrosion and dirt. Corrosion will prevent the terminal and cable from making a good connection.
3. **Battery Case.** Keep the battery case clean. Remove excess dirt and leaves from the top of the case especially. Dirt and debris can cause surface discharge to occur.
4. **Battery Tray.** Battery trays rust away, vintage Porsche owners know this best but as our newer Porsches age it becomes an issue as well. It is important to clear the battery tray area of leaves, dirt, debris and battery acid. They can all combine to cause corrosion and deterioration of the metal battery tray. The acid will eat through the paint exposing the metal to the elements, most importantly moisture. Rusted battery trays are common and can be a general hassle or it can be a costly hassle. In later 944s where corrosion can cause water to leak into the interior area of the vehicle, this moisture can damage the electric control units requiring replacement. With 914s many Porsche owners have experienced having to weld in a whole new tray.
5. **Charge.** If your vehicle is not driven weekly, it may be necessary to externally charge your battery occasionally. Lack of use is hard on a battery, especially an automotive battery. Any unused battery, regardless of chemistry, will self-discharge over time. If you use a trickle charger to keep your battery charged during periods of low use, be sure to use a high-quality unit. The charger should be self-regulated so that it does not over-charge the battery which can lessen the life of the battery.

Over the last several months, we've seen dead batteries in cars sitting for short periods of time that will not take a charge with a trickle charger because the

water level is too low. One Porsche came to use with no gauges working and an intermittently working radio, the cause turned out to be dirty battery terminals which caused a low voltage issue. In yet another case, a new battery quickly discharged and would not take a good charge because it had a low water level. It is a good idea to check a new battery's water level, many times the battery water level is low from the manufacturer or from sitting on a shelf.

Another good practice is to make sure that all electrical accessories are turned off when the motor is not running.

On a final note, although the Porsche owner's manual gives instructions for jump starting a vehicle using jumper cables, we do not recommend it. A slow charge is always better. If your vehicle battery is dead, you should always first disconnect the negative battery cable, then use a charger to charge up the battery, this avoids any potential voltage spikes which can damage the vehicles electrics. We have replaced several expensive control units directly damaged by cars that were started using jumper cables because of voltage spike and incorrect jumper technique. If, after a slow charge, the battery is still dead, have it tested. Continuous, long-term charging can cause the battery to overheat.

At Exotic Motorwerks, when a customer comes in for regular maintenance such as an oil service, we check and top off the battery water level as well as check and clean terminals. Most of the local independent shops in town do this or will if you ask them. If you are a "do-it-yourselfer" then ALWAYS wear safety glasses when checking your battery. Battery acid is not safe in the eyes or on the skin. Your factory owner's manual has more information related to your specific Porsche, you should always review it before doing any work yourself.

Happy Motoring!!