



BITS: TECH NOTE

Avoiding Winter Battery Woes and the Spring Start-up Saga

David Reich

I was recently selected to be a CTEK "Test Pilot", as part of their program to introduce their "smart" battery chargers into the US market. As such, I received one of their Multi US 3300 12 volt chargers to try out. My first impression of the charger is very good. It is a small and well made unit with thoughtfully designed terminals/connections. I will report on its technical features and function at a later date, after I have had more time to put it to use. CTEK is a small Swedish company started specifically to produce the battery chargers that had been developed by their sister company as a by-product of research into modern battery technology. CTEK chargers are supplied as "original equipment" with new Aston Martins, Bentleys, Ferraris and Lamborghinis. More information on the chargers can be found at www.ctek.com, which also was the source for the image below.



Today I thought I would share some comments from the CTEK website regarding winter storage of your car, with respect to your battery. Don't forget to also winterize your fuel system, and of course make sure you have anti-freeze/corrosion inhibitor in your coolant system. Winter is very hard on batteries, partly due to the cold ambient temperatures and partly due to prolonged periods of discharge from non-use.

When putting the vehicle to bed for the winter:

- Ideally the battery should be removed from the vehicle (DO NOT store your battery directly on a concrete floor) but whether removed or not the following should be undertaken:
- The battery should be checked for any cracks and disposed of or repaired professionally if needed.
- The top of the battery, the terminal posts and connections should be carefully cleaned with water and baking soda to remove any dirt or moisture. Dirty or moist surfaces increase the level of self-discharge.
- Contact terminals should be clean, dry and lightly greased to protect against corrosion.
- If the battery has been removed, the compartment it sits in should be cleaned and dried to remove any electrolyte that may be present that will cause corrosion.





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- Traditional wet / flooded batteries (not maintenance free types) should have electrolyte levels checked and topped up between min /max levels with distilled water.
- To avoid a flat battery maintain constant regular charge. If you have electricity in your garage or storage area you can use a smart battery charger that will maintain charge levels, keep the battery in good condition and ensure that your car is ready to drive when spring arrives.

Before re-starting your car in the spring:

- Replace and secure the battery into its compartment if it was removed from the vehicle.
- Ensure that the battery terminals are clean and secure.
- Check battery charge levels and recharge the battery if required.
- It is a common misconception that a jump start, followed by a long drive fully recharges the battery from the alternator. This is not the case, as an alternator will only partly charge the battery. After this first drive, the battery will need to be charged or it will quickly be drained once again.
- If you are unsure about any area of battery maintenance ask a qualified technician.

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