

Winter battery management

Arctic conditions are causing enough problems to operators, so ensuring your fleet's batteries are charged and ready to go is a must. A little more work in the depot can save a great deal of time and money by avoiding costly breakdowns, so in this special feature CBW looks at the leading industry suppliers of batteries and equipment.

Don't get caught out with battery failure this winter

Every year battery-related breakdowns spike the first time wintry weather hits our roads. It's as if the UK had never before been visited by low temperatures and heavy rain, and that frost and snow were something foreign.

As an example, on November 28 and 29 last year, when the first of the winter's storms hit, Green Flag reported an 80% increase in call outs. And an average 30% of those calls were due to 'non start'. These statistics equate to more than 400,000 battery related breakdowns resulting in over 200,000 batteries being replaced at the roadside in the last 12 months alone.

Much of the road transport industries fall foul of incurring unnecessary costs associated with premature battery and electrical failures, through poor maintenance of these components. So it is clear that checking the health of your battery rather than just its state of charge is fast and simple and could save you a whole load of time and money in the future.

One in five vehicles entering a vehicle workshop will have a faulty battery, which can mean it fails during work, even through something relatively simple like having the radio on.

Rozone asks how many of you running fleets or managing them for a client can answer these questions honestly with a completely clear conscience?

■ When the wintry spell of weather hit at the end of



Regular testing and servicing is the key to long battery life

November and early December were you absolutely ready for it?

■ When we get some really bad weather in the next few months - and we will - will you be 100% prepared?

■ In the last five years have any of your vehicles - or those of your customers - broken down, due to battery, starter or alternator failure?

■ Have you ever had to pay expensive "callout" costs at motorway service stations, for a flat battery?

■ Do you replace both batteries, when only one has failed?

■ Would you like to remove the "costs of carelessness" from your business?

■ Does your workshop identify every battery, starter or alternator fault and subsequent potential sale?

With winter having now firmly established its presence, now is the time to make sure you have the right solutions to all of these questions. Routine battery testing and inspection carried out at every service opportunity will eliminate costly breakdowns, service charges, and can generate additional income for your workshop.

Rozone is the UK Supplier of leading Midtronics Battery Management Systems, servicing the Industry with support, consultancy and technical advice.

The specialists in battery power management says it is aware of two things: one is that during service intervals many components are inspected, adjusted and replaced. But the second is that when it comes to the batteries, starter motor and alternator they are more often than not simply ignored. We all know that batteries are an integral part of an efficient and reliable running vehicle and that neglecting them will only lead to unnecessary premature failure and replacement costs, but somehow, it claims, they always get ignored.

Did you know that many vehicles which enter your workshop for repair suffer from a discharged or faulty battery and at least one in ten of the 20 batteries sold every month by the average workshop are returned under warranty - the most common complaint being that they are flat after storage. Despite workshops being covered by supplier warranty, returning these batteries is a time-consuming inconvenience.

With a good three months left of potential adverse weather this would be a good time to make sure you have the right answers to all of these problems. And here's another one: how often is your vehicle fleet serviced? Routine battery testing and inspection carried out at every service opportunity will eliminate costly breakdowns and callout service charges. Even if you do your own recovery and roadside

**SPECIAL
CBW
FEATURE**

assistance it's a cost - and an unnecessary one.

But smart operators - the ones who will thrive in the chaotic conditions of wintry roads and in the chill wind of the credit crunch - know that these problems can all be easily prevented, simply by following a few simple steps:

1 TEST AT EVERY OPPORTUNITY:

24v battery sets work as a pair, in order to prolong their efficiency and life they must be balanced. An unbalanced set of batteries will result in one being overcharged whilst the other will be undercharged resulting in both batteries having to be replaced, much earlier than expected.

Battery Testers perform quick, simple and accurate battery and electrical system tests in seconds without heat, sparks or user interpretation. The results can then be printed and reviewed immediately with customers. The printout can even be personalised with your company contact details.

2 CHARGE BATTERIES AT EVERY OPPORTUNITY:

heavy duty vehicle batteries are cycled more often and deeper than passenger car batteries, and as result require more attention. A battery that is fully charged will have a voltage of 12.72v, anything over this will be surface charge. Sulphation and damage to batteries is critical when a battery voltage reaches 12.4v and below. Vehicles leaving a workshop with low charged batteries will not charge sufficiently during their working routine.

Battery Charger revives, charges and conditions 12v lead-acid, AGM and GEL type batteries. The rapid charging capability is ideal for the garage workshop environment with a simple "plug 'n' go" operation and no need to disconnect the battery.

By introducing a "chargeable" battery maintenance check as a stand-alone operation or as part of a service package you can increase your workshop's revenue.

3 BOOST YOUR VEHICLES:

If you find yourself caught out with a flat battery at roadside - then you need a battery booster that offers great portability and is powerful enough for your fleet from light vans to heavy duty commercial.



Rozone's Midtronic range test, boost and charge batteries

Rozone Battery Boosters are fitted with pure lead batteries ensuring that they deliver extraordinary energy storage and performance. They are made with an unbreakable "lifetime" warranty case which delivers excellent resistance to every day use. Whilst many boosters only transfer power down one side of the clamp, the Rozone Battery Booster uses bronze clamps that are braided together ensuring 100% battery performance is delivered to the casualty vehicle. All boosters are fitted with electronic "surge protection" to make sure they pose no danger to a vehicle's electrical system whilst they are boosting. The product is also supplied with an electronic continuous current automatic charger which maintains the batteries in perfect condition so it is able to deliver full power as and when required.

4 SAVE MONEY, SAVE TIME:

ensuring batteries are tested, balanced and charged at every service interval will prevent your vehicles from breaking down with battery related problems, prevent premature failure of batteries and associated

costs of replacing them earlier than they should be and prevent unnecessary costs associated with "roadside" jump starts and callout costs, for battery related breakdowns

5 INVEST TO SAVE:

take some advice from the professionals. Other providers exist but Rozone is the UK's leading supplier of battery management advice and solutions; you can be assured that Rozone will sell you the product that is right for you to resolve your fleet's problems and offers ongoing maintenance advice and support. Use the right product from suppliers such as Midtronics or CTEK and keep your fleet earning; whatever the weather. The Battery Management service pack not only provides a solution but guarantees to increase your revenue, your profits and customer satisfaction.

Contact Rozone's Battery Power Management Team on 0121 5268185 or email ken.clark@rozone.co.uk for a free, no obligation assessment on how its products and services can help resolve your fleet's and customers' problems.

High performance charger from GYS

Gystart 724E is a brand new, automatic, high performance, 12/24V battery charger/starter for professional users, launched by GYS Ltd, the French battery charger manufacturer.

The GYStart 724E is a feature packed starter safe for use on modern vehicles as it has overvoltage protection and a high quality automatic charger allowing charging to be carried out unsupervised. In addition to operating on 12V and 24V vehicles it has an extremely useful 'remote control' feature enabling operation from the cab/drivers seat.

Specifications are a peak starting current of 700A suitable for starting vehicles up to 145Ah (including short pre-charge) and a 45A charger for charging batteries up to a massive 700Ah.

Though very established in mainland Europe, GYS is relatively new to the UK but the 'Made in France' Gystart 724E is available from a growing range of good quality motor factors, agricultural and industrial dealers.

GYS is a family owned company located in Laval, France, is one of France's largest manufacturers and suppliers of battery chargers as well as MIG, TIG, MMA and plasma welding products, including specialist resistance spot welding, plasma cutting and dent pulling



The 724E is a 12/24v charger

**SPECIAL
CBW
FEATURE**

equipment for the car body sector. GYS has ISO9001/2000, TUV and Thatcham certification.

The Company has 400 employees, including 31 in research and development in an 180,000ft² factory. The company also has subsidiaries in Germany and China and over 50% of turnover goes to export in 95 countries outside France.

■ For further information, call Neil Pulsford, UK commercial director at GYS Ltd on 01926 338609, or email n.pulsford@gys.fr.

OEM quality from Manbat

Manbat knows that a key component when considering the performance of PSV fleets is the battery. The battery is essential for the smooth running of the vehicle, so fitting a good quality unit and ensuring it is well maintained, is sensible fleet management.

Manbat's range of Varta batteries are fitted as standard OE equipment to the vast majority of bus, coach and commercial vehicles manufactured throughout Europe, so by fitting Varta, operators are guaranteeing OEM quality.

If value for money is important, then the Numax brand is the solution. The comprehensive range caters for 98% of all PSV applications and there are no quality concerns, because the batteries are supplied from JCI factories in Europe.

Supplying these brands gives PSV distributor Carlyle Bus and Coach Ltd, the ability to provide the correct product for the correct application. The type 625 is fitted as standard to most Volvo and Scania platforms, but many suppliers provide only a 205Ah replacement. Both Numax and Varta ranges include a 225 Ah like-for-like OE specification replacement.

Operators can protect themselves from the risk of starting failure by fitting its vehicles with a battery protection device. The Numax 'connect + protect' battery protector ensures that there is enough power left to start the engine. These units also help to protect



Manbat supply the Varta battery range to the UK market

expensive electronic equipment and indicate when electrical maintenance is necessary.

When battery failure does occur, then a portable booster pack engine starter is priceless. Using the latest in switching and electronic technology, the Numax 'extreme rescue' range is popular with professional rescue organisations like the police and fire services, as well as commercial and PSV fleet operators.

■ Contact Manbat on 01743 460790 or visit www.manbat.co.uk for further info.

Experience tells for West Midlands battery experts

Adverc BM Ltd., based in Wolverhampton, have been in the battery business since 1983.

The Company began with the idea of promoting the concept of rechargeable nickel cadmium batteries, the ultimate aim being to develop this concept to embrace portable power tools, vacuum cleaners, food mixers, lighting etc. However, funds were not available to develop these ideas and, today, the Black and Deckers of this world have swept



the board with a multitude of rechargeable devices.

Notwithstanding, Adverc is today a recognised authority, world-wide, in the much wider aspects of battery related matters as a whole, their utilisation, monitoring and, more especially, their charging. The cornerstone of the business has been the Adverc Battery Management System, an intelligent controller which enhances the performance of an engine-run alternator or alternators, without stressing alternator or battery(s). A 100% improvement in charging is not uncommon.

Over the past 26 years, the company has moved on into battery management, an expression actually coined by Adverc, some fifteen years ago.

Adverc designs and builds systems as solutions to problems or to make existing battery systems and their charging work better. The firm has workshops

or can travel to operators' premises.

More recently, Adverc has addressed the matter of providing a 'service' to the automotive industry, in the main, so it can help reduce operating and maintenance costs.

The new ONEbox AC & DC distribution options can reduce electrical installations and fit out time by as much as 75%. Alternatively, a range of individual parts and equipment are available at competitive prices, including:

- ADVERC Battery Management Systems
 - Alternators 12v and 24v up to 200amps
 - Batteries
 - Battery Selector Switches
 - Battery Cables, Connectors etc.
 - Blocking-diodes
 - Trailer Charging System (TCS)
 - ONEbox
 - Sleeper Cab Solutions (SCS)
 - Mains Chargers
 - DC-DC Converters
 - DC-DC Chargers
 - DC-AC Inverters
 - Charger/Inverter Combinations (Combis)
 - Digital Circuit Monitors (DCM)
 - Portable LCD Multimeters
 - Generator Sets
 - High output DC Generators
 - Line Conditioners and filters with stabilised voltage supply (VS300)
 - Low/High Voltage Alarm, Protection and Shut-down (Guardian LVPM)
 - Shunt Ammeters and Voltmeters (Clip-on Ammeters)
 - Solar Panels
 - Twin Alternator configurations
 - On-board supplementary charging (OSCAP)
 - Split-Charging Systems
 - Wind Chargers
 - Galvanic Isolators
 - Voltage Sensitive Relays
 - Solenoids
- Most of Adverc's equipment is British made and with emphasis on reliability - the Adverc branded unit has a five-year warranty, for example.
- Finally, and not to be overlooked, is the fact that Adverc provides an advisory service, covering any aspect of battery management and usually free of charge.
- Call 01902 380494 to speak to an expert about your firm's battery needs.