



THE POWERLINE

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Battery Training & Merchandising Made Easy by MK Battery

MK Battery is committed to helping our HME business partners succeed in today's challenging environment. We offer an array of training and merchandising tools specifically designed for the HME dealer. From our Accreditation Kit which features a host of technical training materials to our retail marketing pieces, MK Battery provides the tools you need.

Ask your MK Representative for details.

What happens to my spent batteries...

after the MK Battery route driver picks them up from my shop?

This is a question that is being asked more and more often as environmental protection and conservation issues continue to dominate the headlines. In the battery industry, recycling has become a significant issue as preservation of our limited natural resources becomes increasingly necessary.

At MK Battery, we pride ourselves on being an industry leader when it comes to battery recycling. While your responsibility for safe and legal battery disposal ends once our driver collects the spent batteries from your facility, ours only just begins then. Once we take ownership of these batteries, we follow strict chain-of-custody protocols to move the batteries to our EPA-approved recycling facilities.

Our state-of-the-art recycling system recycles virtually 100% of every used lead-acid battery collected. The batteries are dismantled and the components are separated. The lead is smelted and refined for use in SLA batteries for the automotive industry

(we do not use recycled lead for sealed batteries used in mobility applications). The plastic cases are cleaned, ground, extruded and molded into new cases. The acid is reclaimed through a patented acid reclamation process that allows it to be recycled for use in new batteries thus avoiding potentially hazardous and environmentally threatening acid disposal. Even the sulfur fumes trapped during lead smelting are collected for production of liquid fertilizer which is then sold to the agricultural industry.

The collection and recycling of spent batteries plays an integral role in helping to not only preserve our precious environment, but also to offset some of the high raw material costs associated with the manufacture of lead-acid batteries. As such, MK Battery offers a Spent

Battery Credit for all batteries collected by our Route Deliver Drivers. Please call our Customer Service department or consult your MK driver for details and join us in our continuing effort to protect our environment.



Buying Quality Batteries

By Mark E. Smith / www.wheelchairjunkie.com

I heard a story recently of a high-volume mobility provider who has virtually no service calls from consumers relating to batteries. This provider's track record is remarkable because, industry wide, it's estimated that as high as 60% of power wheelchair service issues ultimately relate to batteries.

Interestingly, my friends and I share the one provider's remarkable experience, as well, where we, in our personal use, have virtually no issues with batteries in our power wheelchairs, either.

How, then, are some avoiding battery issues seemingly all together, while many users seem to have chronic battery issues, suffering reduced range and short-lived batteries?

The two answers are strikingly simple: Proper charging habits, and only using high-quality batteries.

It Can't be Said Enough: Simply Charge

The single most important move one can make toward maintaining a power mobility product is to simply recharge the batteries after every day's use. The reasons why this is important is namely to avoid "hard sulfation," a sort of corrosion that occurs on a battery's internal plates, inhibiting its ability to store power – but, the technical reason aside, truly just recharging the power wheelchair after every day's use, no matter if the power wheelchair is used for one hour per day or 16 hours per day, keeps the batteries in optimal condition, dramatically increasing long-term reliability.

It's a Quality Thing: You Get What You Pay For

The two biggest errors that consumers and providers make is in assuming that all deep-cycle batteries are the same, and that the lower the cost, the better. The fact is, when it comes to deep-cycle batteries, one truly gets what one pays for, where there are vast differences in quality, ones that can mean getting defective batteries from the start versus batteries offering years of optimal range and reliability.

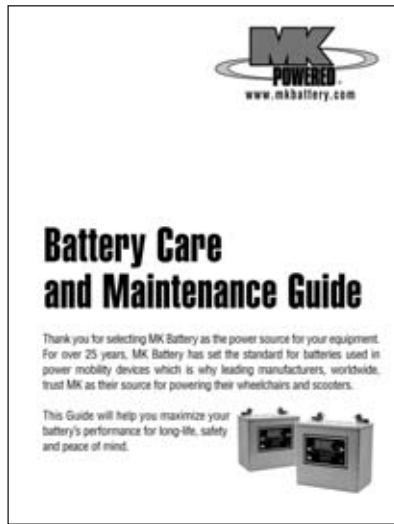
When we speak of battery quality, what's meant is the battery's literal quality of construction. Quality 22NF and Group-24 batteries manufactured in the U.S. and Europe are typically of very high quality compared to those manufactured in Asia (smaller batteries, however, have more consistent construction globally). For example, in 22NF and Group-24 batteries, Western construction uses exceptional properties in the lead plates, keeping sulfation potentials to approximately 7%, whereas Asian batteries mostly use recycled lead and questionable materials, creating plates possible of sulfation potentials exceeding 35% – this means reduced range and lifespan. Also, whereas Western batteries are assembled of individual, quality-controlled pieces, Asian batteries are typically formed in-place, limiting the potential for quality checks on vital aspects like consistency of plate thickness. And, while Western batteries typically use highly-sealed valves, threaded in-place, with gaskets, for an air-tight seal, Asian batteries typically mold-in the valves, a less-sure seal, risking air leaks.

The result of the quality differences between Western- and Asian-manufactured batteries is that the poorer-quality batteries from Asia – that is, those also sold at bargain-basement prices – are prone to performance-robbing sulfation due to poor plate materials, decreased range due to inconsistent plate construction, and decreased lifespan due to "dry-out" caused by leaking valves. By contrast, Western-manufactured batteries avoid these issues in general with far superior construction leading to reduced sulfation, consistent range capacity, and an air-tight seal.



Recharge Reminder Stickers

Chronic undercharging is the principal threat to the performance of sealed batteries used in mobility equipment. In many respects, undercharging is as harmful as overcharging. Keeping a battery in an undercharged condition allows the positive plate to corrode and the plates to shed, dramatically shortening life. Also, an undercharged battery must work harder than a fully charged battery, which further contributes to shorter life. MK Battery is now offering wheelchair/scooter stickers to help minimize such performance issues by reminding users to recharge their batteries nightly. These attractive stickers are available to MK customers free of charge for placement on dispensed power mobility equipment. For your supply, please call 1-800-372-9253 or consult your MK Battery Route Delivery Driver.



New! Battery Care and Maintenance Guide

Effective battery care and maintenance can help reduce service calls by maximizing battery performance and life. This new guide provides consumers with concise tips on proper care, charging, storage & maintenance and safety aspects associated with batteries used in their mobility equipment. These guides specifically instruct consumers to have their batteries

installed only by properly trained wheelchair or scooter technicians and are available to MK dealers, free of charge, for dispensing with new power mobility equipment and battery replacements. For your supply, please call 1-800-372-9253 or consult your MK Battery Route Delivery Driver.

Spotting Quality: Look for the Origin

As a consumer or provider, one can't look at a 22NF or Group-24 battery from afar and know its quality – after all, most batteries look the same – nor can one look inside a battery on the shelf and see inside to its construction. However, an awareness of the markings of a quality battery goes a long way toward identification. Firstly, look for a “Made in the U.S.A” label (as opposed to “Made in China”), on the battery itself. Secondly, there are a family of brands, lead by MK Battery, that are of the highest quality – and MK is a hallmark. Therefore, the “Made in the U.S.A” marking on the front of a battery, along with sticking to a well-known brand, are meaningful ways to spot a quality battery.

The Truth About Price: Invest for the Long Term

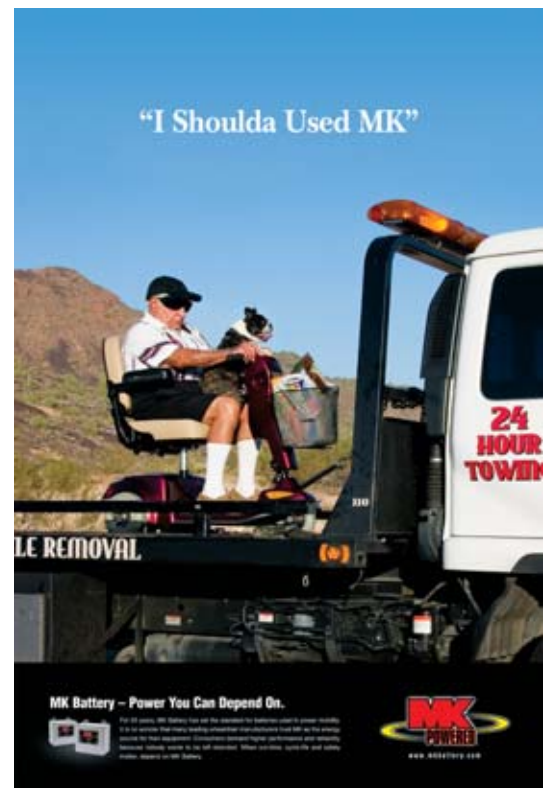
Low battery prices are tempting, especially for those paying out-of-pocket, with limited budgets. And, when one shops online, seeing Asian-manufactured Group-24 batteries selling for \$249 per pair versus \$369 for a Western-manufactured pair, the over \$100 savings may seem tempting. However, again, quality is key, and Asian-manufactured batteries of low cost are commonly of low quality, with dramatically diminished range and lifespan, making for a poor investment. Put simply, spending an extra \$100 or so on high-quality, Western-manufactured batteries will usually save money over the life of the power wheelchair, and, most importantly, ensure optimal performance and reliability.

The Smart Move: Don't Skimp on Batteries

Most consumers want to save money on purchases – and it's a wise outlook. However, when it comes to power wheelchair batteries, the wisest investment is in the highest quality batteries, which typically cost more. Look for the “Made in the U.S.A.” marking, don't be put-off by price, follow proper charging protocols, and you'll become part of a meaningful club: Those who need to worry far less about power wheelchair reliability.

Posters Available

MK Battery has retail posters for HME/Mobility showrooms. The poster is available free of charge. For yours, please call 1-800-372-9253 or consult your MK Battery Route Delivery Driver.





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