CART TRENDS

All Things Golf Cart: Buying, Owning, Modding, Driving, Accessorizing & Maintaining Them

LET'S TALK BATTERIES

Whether you have a gas or battery-operated cart, all have batteries in them.

Lead Acid are the most common batteries in golf carts. two electrodes submerged in an electrolyte of sulfuric acid. They are maintained by adding distilled distilled water to their 'cells'. Life expectancy is 3-4 years, but some can last longer with proper maintenance. They come in voltages of 6-volt, 8 volt and 12 volts depending on your cart and what it has.

AGM Acid Batteries are similar to Lead Acid but differ in that it is a sealed unit and has a thin glass mat that absorbs the electrolyte. This type of battery is designed for vehicles with heavy use and vibration being a major factor. They tend to last up to 7 years compared to traditional Lead Acid batteries.

Lithium-Ion Batteries are the next generation compared to traditional lead-based batteries and can be charged and discharged thousands of times. They come as a single unit in most cases and offer hundreds of pounds less weight to your cart.

Traditional Lead acid vs AGM Lead Acid: Lead Acid cost is lower and yield a life expectancy of charge cycles or times on a full charge of about 300 charges. An AGM battery will have a higher cost per battery but they average a 500-600 charge cycle life, sometimes even higher, with less maintenance with no watering. But if price is a concern and maintenance isn't an issue then traditional Lead Acid batteries are the way to go.

The average cost of Lead Acid batteries installed is $995-1095; AGMs are $1500-2000.

Lead Acid batteries vs Lithium-Ion:
Cost is a major factor in the initial set up so don't spit your drink out yet. As we mentioned earlier you can replace traditional Lead Acid batteries for about $1000 depending on where and who does them. Lithium Ion set ups for your cart are more costly but effective in the long run and a lot of factors determine what's best for you and your overall use.

Lead Acids $995-1095; Lithium Ions $2995-4000.

In the end it is my expert opinion that if money isn't an option and you'll be enjoying your cart seven days a week then upgrade your cart to Lithium Ion. You'll get a longer drive time and the cart will keep a more constant power longer vs the Lead Acid batteries. When Lead Acid batteries get to about 50%, they tend to be sluggish and have a surging effect. Not to mention your speed will decrease. With Lithium Ion, there is no drop in power until you get down to about 3% of total charge. Again, If you're the average golf cart owner and a normal user, then Lead Acid is the way to go. The cost is less, and maintenance isn't that bad. But think of this: each Lead Acid battery weighs in at about 80 lbs. each, at almost 500 total lbs. of weight to your cart. A Lithium Ion set is about 90 lbs in total. That 400 more pounds difference is a lot of weight, not to mention a reduction in driving time. And, life expectancy is 10 years plus and can have over 3000-5000 charging cycles vs. 3-5 years on average for Lead Acid.

- With John Poluga
for The Magnolia News

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DO NOT let your batteries get to this sorry state!

With Lead Acid batteries, make sure all your terminals are corrosion free and add only distilled water once every three months as needed. Charge your batteries entirely after every use. You'll get a longer lifespan by doing this and this will ensure full charging capacity. Average charge times are about 8-12 hours and the charger or OBC (onboard computer) on the cart will shut the charger off at 100% charge. An occasional odd smell in your garage from the batteries from charging and nothing to be alarmed about. Consult a professional for more questions.