Follow these tips for the longest life:

- Avoid ultra-deep discharges.
- Don't leave a battery at a low stage of charge for an extended length of time. Charge a discharged battery as soon as possible.
- Don't cycle a battery at a low state of charge without regularly recharging fully.
- Use the highest initial charging current available (up to 30% of the 20-hour capacity per hour) while staying within the proper temperature-compensated voltage range.

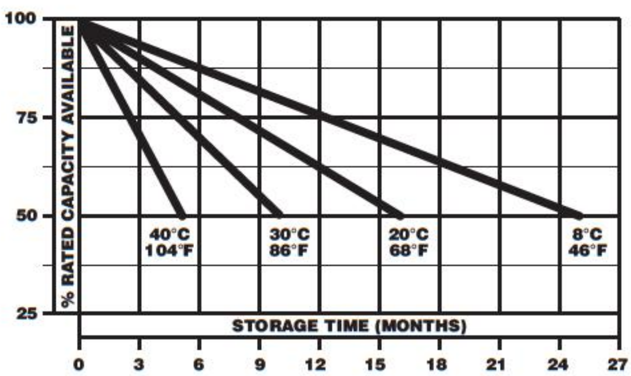
Why can't EPM VRLA batteries be discharged too low?

Our VRLA batteries are designed to be **"acid-starved."** This means that the power (sulfate) in the acid is used before the power in the plates. This design protects the plates from ultra-deep discharges. Ultra-deep discharging is what causes life-shortening plate shedding and accelerated positive grid corrosion which can destroy a battery.

Why does temperature have such a dramatic effect on batteries?

Temperature is a major factor in battery performance, shelf life, charging and voltage control. At higher temperatures there is dramatically more chemical activity inside a battery than at lower temperatures. The following charts graphically illustrate this fact.

Typical Self-Discharge of VRLA Batteries at Different Temperatures



AGM Charge and Float Voltages at Various Temperature Ranges

Temp. °F	Charge Optimum	Charge Maximum	Float Optimum	Float Maximum	Temp. °C
≥ 120	13.60	13.90	12.80	13.00	≥ 49
110 – 120	13.80	14.10	12.90	13.20	43 – 49
100 – 110	13.90	14.20	13.00	13.30	38 – 43
90 – 100	14.00	14.30	13.10	13.40	32 – 38
80 – 90	14.10	14.40	13.20	13.50	27 – 32
70 – 80	14.30	14.60	13.40	13.70	21 – 27
60 – 70	14.45	14.75	13.55	13.85	16 – 21
50 – 60	14.60	14.90	13.70	14.00	10 – 16
40 – 50	14.80	15.10	13.90	14.20	4 – 10
≤ 40	15.10	15.40	14.20	14.50	≤ 4

Gel Charge and Float Voltages at Various Temperature Ranges

Temp. °F	Charge Optimum	Charge Maximum	Float Optimum	Float Maximum	Temp. °C
≥ 120	13.00	13.30	12.80	13.00	≥ 49
110 – 120	13.20	13.50	12.90	13.20	44 – 48
100 – 109	13.30	13.60	13.00	13.30	38 – 43
90 – 99	13.40	13.70	13.10	13.40	32 – 37
80 – 89	13.50	13.80	13.20	13.50	27 – 31
70 – 79	13.70	14.00	13.40	13.70	21 – 26
60 – 69	13.85	14.15	13.55	13.85	16 – 20
50 – 59	14.00	14.30	13.70	14.00	10 – 15
40 – 49	14.20	14.50	13.90	14.20	5 – 9
≤ 39	14.50	14.80	14.20	14.50	≤ 4

What is acid stratification? How do VRLA batteries prevent it?

See page 6 for a detailed explanation of this phenomenon.

How does a battery recharge?

The process is the same for all types of lead-acid batteries: flooded, gel and AGM. The actions that take place during discharge are the reverse of those that occur during charge.

The discharged material on both plates is lead sulfate ($PbSO_4$). When a charging voltage is applied, charge flow occurs. Electrons move in the metal parts; ions and water molecules move in the electrolyte. Chemical reactions occur at both the positive and negative plates converting the discharged material into charged material. The material on the positive plates is converted to lead dioxide (PbO_2); the material on the negative plates is converted to lead (Pb). Sulfuric acid is produced at both plates and water is consumed at the positive plate.

If the voltage is too high, other reactions will also occur. Oxygen is ripped from water molecules at the positive plates and released as a gas. Hydrogen gas is released at the negative plates—unless, oxygen gas can reach the negative plates first and "recombine" into H_2O.

A battery will "gas" near the end of charge because the charge rate is too high for the battery to accept. A temperature-compensating, voltage-regulating charger, which automatically reduces the charge rate as the battery approaches the fully charged state, eliminates most of this gassing. **It is extremely important not to charge batteries for long periods of time at rates which cause them to gas** because they use water, which in sealed valve-regulated batteries cannot be replaced. Of course, no battery should be overcharged for a long period of time…even at low rates using so-called "trickle charges."

In a fully charged battery, most of the sulfate is in the sulfuric acid. As the battery discharges, some of the sulfate begins to form on the plates as lead sulfate ($PbSO_4$). As this happens, the acid becomes more dilute, and its specific gravity drops as water replaces more of the sulfuric acid. A fully discharged battery has more sulfate in the plates than in the electrolyte.

The following illustration shows the relationship between specific gravity readings and the combination of the sulfate from the acid with the positive and negative plates at various states of charge.