

# Looking after Mobility Scooter Batteries

Looking after and regularly charging your battery will increase its reliability and maximum performance from your scooter and buggy. (BHTA, 2004), (Help My Mobility, 2010).

Scooter and buggy batteries are designed to give out a steady supply of power. They are likely to need replacing after about 12 or 18 months, although you may be able to use them for longer if you take care of them and check them regularly. Some scooters and buggies may require two 12 volt rechargeable batteries. The size of the batteries is directly proportional to the range and weight limit of the scooter or buggy. (Rica, 2010).

Batteries are rated in amp hours, which in combination with the efficiency of the motor, provide a guide to the distance the scooter can travel before requiring recharging. The higher the amp the greater the power. (Help My Mobility, 2010).

## **Weight of batteries**

Batteries can be heavy and may be the heaviest part of the scooter or buggy. You may need to think about this if you dismantle the scooter for transport or storage. The weight of single batteries (many vehicles have two) vary from 5kg - 26kg. (Rica, 2010).

## **Charging your battery**

Batteries are an essential component of your mobility scooter and can be recharged by using an in-built or external battery charger unit from an electric power source.

External chargers keep the overall weight of the scooter down and may be less likely to fail, as they are not subject to the scooter vibrations, which in-built chargers are. (Government of South Australia, 2008).

**Here are some general points to consider when charging your batteries:**

- Charging your battery correctly is one of the most important procedures to ensure long life and maximum distance coverage. (Help My Mobility, 2010). It is advisable to carefully read guidelines recommended by the manufacturer.
- Check the charging point is easily accessible.
- Plug the charger into the scooter charging point before plugging into the mains.
- The battery charger may have a mains and a charging indicator light. Check they are both on.
- Take care not to overcharge the batteries. If this is frequently done it changes the chemical composition and will reduce the life of the battery.
- Most chargers have a cut out and a light indicator which operate when the battery is fully charged.



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### General tips:

- Only use the approved battery charger compatible with your scooter or buggy. (Help My Mobility, 2010).
- Vehicles in constant use should be charged daily. Daily use will increase the life span of the batteries.
- New batteries must be fully charged before use. (Help My Mobility, 2010).
- If you have a wet-cell battery, the room needs to be well ventilated, as the battery will give off fumes when being charged. (Rica, 2010).
- Store your scooter and battery in a cool dry place if possible. If exposed to damp, it can cause damage to the battery. So if your scooter and battery get wet or damp, simply wipe down with a cloth. (Help My Mobility, 2010).
- If replacing the batteries, check that the new ones will fit into the allotted space.
- Always dispose of old batteries through an approved source.
- Please contact your supplier or local authority to find out how to dispose of your batteries appropriately.

## Five tips on looking after your mobility scooter batteries

Your electric mobility scooter will most likely come with two batteries, and you should look for a 12-month guarantee that guards against any manufacturing defect that may cause them to fail prematurely. The reality is that mobility scooter battery life varies greatly. You should reasonably expect them to last for at least two years, but there's every chance it could be much longer than that - particularly if they are well maintained.

Here are five tips on how looking after your mobility scooter batteries and prolonging their life for as long as possible.

### 1. Use them up when they're new

When your batteries are new, it's a good idea to use them as close as possible to their full capacity before charging them again. So, if your battery capacity is twelve miles, and you only use the vehicle for three miles, you shouldn't re-charge. Instead, use the mobility scooter again at least two more times before charging the batteries. You don't need to do this forever, but if you repeat the process a few times there is a better chance that the batteries will work at their maximum capacity in the longer term.

### 2. Get into a charging habit

The general advice is to charge your mobility scooter batteries after every use - but this is not strictly accurate because you may use the vehicle on more than one occasion during the day. For example, it would not be a good idea to charge it after a quick morning trip to the shop when you know you are going to use it again in the afternoon.

An important point to note is that you should not interrupt charging. In other words, be sure that the batteries are fully charged before you take them off charge. The best thing to do is charge the batteries overnight - as long as you have used the mobility scooter that day. There's no harm in having your batteries fully charged and then using the mobility vehicle at a later time, but if you use your scooter every day, it's quite simple - charge the batteries every night.



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### **3. Use the correct charger and don't overcharge them**

Only use the charger that has been supplied with your mobility scooter. Using an incompatible battery charger is likely to be detrimental to battery life. If you lose your battery charger, be sure to replace it with one that's approved or supplied by the vehicle's manufacturer.

It will take around eight hours to charge your batteries to their full capacity, and while it's impossible to disconnect them from the charger the moment they're full, it's important to not leave them connected unnecessarily. As soon as you know your batteries are fully charged, disconnect them. When you remove your mobility scooter from charging, firstly turn off the mains and then disconnect the charger from the vehicle.

### **4. Keep them dry**

Dampness can be harmful to all batteries - and mobility scooters batteries are no different in this respect. If your mobility scooter gets sodden with rainwater, it's a good idea to remove the batteries and wipe them down with a dry cloth before replacing.

Keeping the battery terminals greased will also contribute to a longer life. Use petroleum jelly for this, because many greasing products contain materials that conduct electricity or degrade plastic, or both.

### **5. Store them properly when not in use**

Extreme temperatures can have a very detrimental effect on the life of your mobility scooter batteries - so it's important that you store them in a suitable place if you are not going to use the vehicle for a prolonged period. Leaving your vehicle in a cold garage with the batteries intact, for example, is not advisable. The best solution is to store your mobility scooter indoors, but not too close to a radiator. If that's not possible, removed your fully-charged batteries and put them in a cool, dry place such as a cupboard.



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