

## UNUSED DURING THE LOCKDOWN, MY BATTERY IS DYING... HOW TO SAVE IT?

*As professionals specialized in automotive batteries, we would like to make some adjustments to the recommendations that are currently published in the press in order to best advise car drivers on how to properly take care of their batteries.*

### Why is your battery in danger?

#### **Your battery, a living organ which can also suffer from Covid-19**

Lockdown measures that are currently implemented require you to immobilize your vehicle or to use it on a much less regular basis than usual, which is not without consequences for the health of your car or its battery.

Electronic parking break, car alarm, central locking... our vehicles are equipped with lots of electronics that stay in stand-by and permanently consume energy, without you noticing it.

Even when it's not in use, your vehicle's battery continues to work and remains stressed. If a new fully charged battery is able to perform these tasks without any issue over a long period of time, an older or slightly discharged battery is in danger. Being the essential electrical organ in your vehicle, the battery is doomed to gradually discharge. It therefore needs to be recharged from time to time in order to keep it in good health (in normal conditions, your battery will recharge normally when you are driving).



#### **Starting your engine for 15 minutes will not save your battery**

Contrary to what you can read in many articles or advice given in a hurry on the web, NO, starting your engine and let the vehicle run stationary for 15 minutes will not recharge your battery, whether you do it every 15 days or even once a week.

By starting your engine, you will indeed produce electricity but this will not be enough to save this main electrical organ that is the battery. In some cases, it is even the opposite effect that can occur.

The alternator, this part that is connected to your engine, acts in your vehicle like a dynamo on a bicycle. Once the engine is started, the alternator starts to move, activated by the engine's rotations. When idling, vehicle stationary with the engine running, the alternator does not provide much energy; probably enough for the vehicle's usual consumption but not enough to properly recharge the battery. The engine must indeed run at higher speeds to allow recharging in good conditions, especially if the battery is already discharged or aging.

In order to give a real boost to this organ, it is recommended to drive at cruising speed for several kilometers ... This short quarter of an hour, engine running, vehicle stationary, will therefore not save your battery.

On the contrary, if your battery already shows signs of weakness, successive starts without driving will only stress it unnecessarily and deplete it even more.

Starting your vehicle regularly while stationary is therefore not a necessary action for maintaining the battery, quite the contrary.

## So how to take care of your battery?

### Act BEFORE breakdown

As a living organ, a battery has to be controlled and monitored. Don't wait for the breakdown to react and to take actions. In comparison, you don't wait to run out of gas – with empty tank – to fill up. The same goes for your battery which deserves regular preventive checks. Except in exceptional cases, a battery does not fail overnight. It gradually discharges over time while continuing to supply the necessary energy for starting, with more or less difficulty. In order to avoid any discomfort, it is essential to look after your battery regularly and to react before the breakdown. How?

### An essential checkpoint: the voltage, to be measured when the engine is stopped and before using / starting the vehicle

The health indicator of your battery is given by its voltage. This is indeed the first checkpoint to analyze. This will give you a clear and reliable indication of its condition. A tester or a simple voltmeter will allow you to take the voltage of your battery, to be measured with the engine off, before using the vehicle (the measurement after use or after starting may be distorted).

*TIP: During the lockdown, if you don't have one of these devices, think about visiting the DIY or automobile department of your store during your grocery shopping.*



Here's how to analyze the result (to be measured with the engine stopped, always before using the vehicle, never after):

$\geq 12,7$  Volts

- **A voltage greater than or equal to 12.7 Volts** indicates that your battery is like new and in good health. No worries about having your vehicle stopped.

$12,4 \text{ V} < T < 12,7 \text{ V}$

- For a voltage **between 12.7 Volts and 12.4 Volts**, the diagnosis remains good. However, it will be necessary to test the voltage more regularly to check it does not drop below 12.4 V. When approaching this value, charging using a dedicated device is however recommended so that your battery regains its maximum performance.

$< 12,4$  Volts

- **Below 12.4 Volts**, there is cause for concern. At this stage, your battery is overdue and recharging via an adequate charger is **imperative** if you want to avoid any unpleasant surprises to come. However, recharging may not be enough and the battery may need to be replaced with a new one.

## Try to recharge your battery before replacing it

Charging is indeed a vital step that can save your battery. This process allows you to give your battery a facelift, especially by desulfating it.

In this context, you must carefully follow the charging instructions mentioned by your charging device manufacturer.

If after recharging, the measured voltage - engine off - remains below 12.7 V, then consider replacing the battery with a new one.

**Before replacing your battery**, check if it can be recharged using a charger.



## Replacing your battery during the lockdown

Lubalux is at your disposal to arrange an appointment at home to replace your battery if necessary. You then benefit from a tailor-made service to best support you according to your particular case and with the most economical solution. In addition to delivery, we can install the battery in your vehicle, taking care to preserve the electronic settings. Finally, we pick your old battery up so that it integrates the recycling chain! During these operations, all sanitary precautions are implemented by our team to comply with health and social distancing measures.



### What should you absolutely avoid to do?

We strongly discourage you to disconnect your battery in order to save it, especially on recent vehicles or on models equipped with an electronic dashboard. By disconnecting your battery, you risk losing essential data as well as deprogramming the on-board computer which could then cause your vehicle not to be able to restart electronically.

We remind you that short and regular journeys are really demanding for your battery. It is effectively used at each start-up and does not receive enough energy to recharge, or at least to keep its initial state of charge. Gradually, in this scenario, your battery is inexorably doomed to discharge. In the same way, starting your vehicle without driving is not a viable solution to save your battery. This usage, without proving any beneficial effect on your battery, however negatively impacts the environment a lot, think about it!

As a conclusion, note that simple regular checks will allow you to know the health status of your battery and enable you to react in time to save it.

**Just as for you, take care of your battery during the lockdown.**

## TO SUM UP

Lubalux's advices in 5 key points:



1. **Do not disconnect your battery** (very important for recent vehicles or any vehicle equipped with an electronic dashboard).
2. **Do not run your engine while stationary** (negative effect on the environment and no benefit for the battery, on the contrary).
3. **Limit short and repeated urban journeys.**
4. **Testing your battery is essential** for knowing its state of charge and knowing whether to worry or not
5. **Try to recharge your battery if necessary** (voltage <12.4 Volts with the engine stopped, before use, never after) and if you have the equipment (if not, call a specialist who can diagnose your battery and advise you). Please note, a recharge will not necessarily save your battery, in which case it must be replaced by a new one.

## ABOUT US

LUBALUX is a distribution structure for automotive and heavy duty vehicles' batteries dedicated to the Luxembourg market, set up by the company LUBATEX GROUP.

LUBATEX GROUP is the largest exporter of European-made batteries to Africa, the Middle East and the French overseas departments and territories (approximately 1.5 million batteries shipped each year to this geographic area). Throughout these territories, the expertise of Lubatex Group is recognized and reinforced by the exclusive distribution of the leading brands Varta and Energizer in these areas.

Being able to rely on a local stock in Luxembourg and a stock of more than 80,000 batteries accessible within 2 hours from Luxembourg-City via Lubatex Group, Lubalux can treat any starter battery request at very short notice therefore offering professionals and individuals the necessary reactivity to urgent needs.

The group also benefits from an unparalleled presence via the Varta Power Zone - Maison de la Batterie - Vaica network in France, which confers a very strong experience of local distribution and regional issues.

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