

# AGM Battery Charging

**Problem:** I read the battery article in the April 10 issue of the *Blue Beret* with great interest and feel I've finally found someone who might help with questions about my 2008 - 31 foot Airstream Classic Limited. This trailer came from the factory with glass mat batteries, solar panels, and an inverter with 2 special outlets mounted alongside the regular outlets in the living area.

## Here are my questions:

What is the low battery capacity for these AGM batteries?

Several times I have stopped at Wal-Mart for the night, go inside and the current capacity level is already down to 85%! What's that about? Do I need to install a computer chip charger? I am relatively sure Airstream did not install one in this trailer.

Secondly, would I be wise to install one with the Battery Wizard now? Those AGM babies are very expensive and I don't want to "cook" them with an inadequate charger.

Finally, would the solar panels keep AGM batteries charged up during the winter without having AC power in the trailer?

## Answer:

You can take the AGM's into a deep cycle (down to 20% of a fully charged battery) or about 10 volts without harming the battery. You can do this several thousand times without any permanent damage.

You absolutely need a computer chip charger if Airstream did not install one. The optimum charge voltages are different for an AGM and also change with battery temperature. So you need a charger that has a temperature sensor that optimizes the charge voltage along with the computer control. The sensor is attached to the battery terminal and connects to the charger (usually with a telephone type cable/connector).

Yes the AGM batteries are quite expensive and the sooner you provide the proper charging environment the longer they will last.

Solar panels will keep the batteries up during the winter providing you have adequate sunlight (Florida, Arizona, etc.). AGM's have no liquid so they will not freeze. I keep my charger plugged in all of the time the rig is parked at home (24/7). With the correct charger the batteries should last many years since the computer controlled charger constantly adjusts to the batteries needs.

## **Question:**

My primary option is the Intelli-Power 9200 Series Converter/ Chargers with Charge Wizard, but the blurb doesn't say anything about a temperature sensor.

## **Answer 2:**

The Intelli-Power Chargers with the Charge wizard are fine for flooded batteries, however, they do not have an AGM charge mode. Some of the best chargers are from Xantrex. The True Charge 2 is available in 10, 20 or 40 amp rated units. It has an AGM mode as well as a gel cell and flooded battery switch. They have a temperature sensor with cable available (at extra cost) that hooks up to the battery. I used a factory rebuilt unit in my 1990 Classic Motorhome for over 23 years and for the last two years it has been traveling around in England with the same charger. Check online for the instruction manual. The 40 amp unit lists for \$400 but is available for under

\$300 at many sites. Amazon sells them for \$310 with free shipping. A 40 amp rated unit would allow you to easily handle extra batteries in the future and provide a fast charging rate.