

BATTERIES

The following advisory was written and submitted by Mark Paget. Thanks Mark.

Advisory

MG-B Batteries

Every Australian produced MG-B had two six volt batteries to achieve twelve volts. Essentially a carry-over from the preceding MG-A. Whether to achieve accurate weight distribution, aesthetics, symmetry or just design carry-over, two sixes were it. At the time six volt batteries were still common place. This presence has continued to decline. While still available today through major suppliers such as Century, they are not always immediately to hand or the buyer's first choice.

When requiring a new electricity reservoir, predominantly owners get cheap. Then making various justifications to placate themselves and others. The current default is to install a single, small, rectangular, 12 volt as common with countless Asian cars for the past 30 years. Any more detail than that is disregarded:

- actual dimensions, including height,
- retention method (being a design feature of the battery's case),
- terminal location,
- terminal type, and
- battery capacity (capability), whether judged in CCA or any other method.

Circa 300 cold cranking amps (CCA) is entry level. Over 600CCA is potentially available. There are various small, conventional, wet batteries with extremely high capability. Along with proper fit, this usually isn't taken into consideration. Lithium and gel-cell units also present themselves. The remaining carrier is left empty. The potential of two batteries, with or without an isolation system presents itself. Either to maximise starting capability or to partition modern accessory draw:

- two batteries in parallel
- split charge relay and starter solenoid, or a
- management system.

In other markets, blow-mould or vacuum-form liners have been made for the surplus carrier. Turning the disused space into a storage area for odds and sods. Almost never imported to Australia and certainly not copied by any local manufacturer. The average car is being driven less and less. Batteries don't like sitting around, they need to be cycled. Natural battery discharge, sulphation... The average owner insists on having a modern radio. Therefore some level of continuous draw will be present.

Yes, 'some' owners have employed smart chargers. A device capable of understanding the battery's needs and responding accordingly. A battery charger that is safe to remain connected and turned on. Typically used with a quick disconnect plug permanently attached to the battery. Though frequently poorly fitted. Unnecessary holes drilled in the body, cables pinched under the battery cover... Instead of utilising the access grommet for either rear dampener.

In general there aren't any restraints available for these small rectangular batteries, for all the points previously mentioned. The quickest means of retention is the plastic zip (cable) tie. Looks cheap and is but utterly effective and capable of dealing with the multitude of sizes and positions encountered.

Other owner induced anomalies include missing that the earth point is common with both carriers. Plus owners/repairers cutting off battery terminals and thus shortening the cable. The earth and even the bridge cable can be readily replaced. Not the main cable. The new shortened length now governs battery positioning. Writing a date on the new battery or marking post polarity clearly with a paint pen is all too logical. The original bridge cable runs through flexible steel tubing 'P' clipped to the bodywork. Not just a single layer of cable insulation rubbing against the edges of panel holes as you might find today.

Manual battery isolator switches are often fitted. Usually in an obvious to all position. Typically with the removable key left in place and being the entry level or budget product. Lucas items have been reproduced and unused originals still pop up. Though the first few Lucas items don't have a removable key. Any brand of the on-post (screw knob) isolators are susceptible to

corrosion. Predominantly from never being lubricated. They also have height issues. Particularly when fitted to a 12 volt battery that is taller than the intended 6 volt, in a carrier with a secured steel lid.

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