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Your PWC Is Safely Stored...Now Don't Forget Your Battery

Unless you're fortunate enough to live in one of those few areas of the country where temperatures remain tolerable, chances are by now your PWC has been stowed away for the season. Hopefully you've flushed, winterized, treated the fuel, dried everything out, and packed it away till the mercury once again rises to the point where you actually want to get wet again.

If you've done your job right, you won't need to worry about much over your craft's winter hibernation. There's one vital part of that craft, however, that still needs some attention — the battery.

You know, that little rectangular box that we tend to neglect and forget, and then curse with all sorts of interesting four-letter-word combinations when it leaves us stranded on the shoreline? Yeah, that's the one. Your battery doesn't demand too much, but it does require a little attention if you want it to last for more than a season.

Here are three simple steps to keep it going like the Energizer Bunny:

1. Clean it. Yup, that's right. Your battery — especially its terminals — should actually be cleaned before you stow it away for the winter. The simplest method is with baking soda and water. Combine a little bit of each and mix into a toothpaste-like consistency, grab an old toothbrush, and scrub the mixture around the terminals to remove any corrosion. The mix will react with any corrosion buildup, bubble like a science experiment, and clean all that gunk away.

Or at least, most of that gunk. Stubborn deposits will require something a little tougher than your worn-out toothbrush. Try a wire brush, or steel wool, and scrub them till clean. When finished, rinse with clean water and dry the terminals with a rag.

2. Don't "goop" it. Once those terminals are clean, old-school thought would be to goop them up with something like Vaseline or waterproof grease to reduce future corrosion. According to Boats.com's electronics guru Ed Sherman, however, that's a mistake. As Sherman explains, Vaseline or even white lithium grease can literally melt on a hot summer day under a heavy electrical load. The liquid goo will then seep down between the battery post and terminal clamp, where it will eventually oxidize and turn into the exact opposite of what you want on a battery terminal — an insulator.

3. Charge! Don't toss a weakened battery on the garage shelf. Charge it fully to help it resist the build-up of sulfate crystals on the battery's internal plates, which will shorten its lifespan. And then, keep it charged over the winter, checking on it every 45 days. Why? Aside from preventing the aforementioned sulfation, a discharged battery can actually freeze if storage temps dip low enough.

Perhaps the best solution is to maintain that battery's charge over the winter with a product like the battery tender. It won't overcharge or overheat the battery like a trickle charger, but will instead monitor and maintain the battery's full charge without damage. If it's too late and you find yourself in the market for a [new battery](http://www.shopsbt.com/mm5/merchant.mvc?Screen=SEARCH&I1.x=0&I1.y=0&q=batt)

[ery](#)) make sure to follow these three simple steps to ensure the new one lasts for seasons to come!