

Craig R. - feedback on recent experience with Dual Battery systems

Over my many years of travelling with supposedly the best available auxiliary battery system available at the time for the vehicle, I have never gotten more than 48 hours out of a N70 Exide or Supercharge Deep Cycle battery powering a 40-50 litre fridge. Most times only approx. 36 hours (night, day, night) in a variety of vehicles – Patrol, 105s, 100TD and Hilux, and most times that was in the cooler climates of southern and central Australia.

Recently we purchased a new Land Cruiser 79 series, which is fitted with a temperature compensating alternator, we fitted a DC to DC charger this time around and an Exide AGM ST27DC 105AH Battery mounted in our slide on camper. This system could be mounted in the engine bay but our preference this time was in the camper based on issue with heat and an AGM style battery. The AGM battery is 306mm long so will squeeze into most N70 size trays.

I believe the combination of a DC to DC charger and AGM battery is a winner! After 3 nights and 2 days (66+hrs) of powering the fridge and lights, the battery was only down to 11.6v and still powering everything fine. This was at Wallaby Creek Music Festival near Cooktown where the temperature was 34c during the day & 22c at night. The fridge was opened and closed many times and hot drinks added on a regular basis so it was working- hard. On our travels from Darwin to Cairns around the Gulf of Carpentaria there were 3 other occasions where we stayed 3 nights in quite tropical temperatures without starting the vehicle, and to my surprise the battery kept powering the fridge and lights.

This combination is worth considering if you are serious about getting the most out of your auxiliary battery system no matter what alternator system they have on their vehicle. Let's face it, most people are expecting, a lot from their fridge and they draw a lot more current than the manufactures claim in our tropical climate.

In reality it does not cost a lot more to get a very effective system. Imagine the versatility of this set up with a 120amp portable solar panel, which is our next purchase. So that we stay longer a 120w solar panel with a built in regulator will see us sitting around for up to 5 days I reckon.

Regards

Craig R

December 2011