## How often should I replace my car battery?

Car batteries can last for five years or a little more when properly cared for depending on how you use your car and care for the batteries. With modern cars, often used on a daily basis, other than starting the engine, the battery also powers various electrical systems in the vehicle including lights, radio and infotainment screens, entertainment systems, heated rear windows, windscreen wipers, air conditioning, power windows, satnav, electrical power steering, and anything else that needs an electrical source. With a classic car like an MGBGTV8 the systems that need electrical support are less sophisticated but can include a heated rear window, heater blower motor, windscreen wipers, radio and radiator cooling fans plus any added modern devices used in the car like a satnav and a mobile phone charging lead. Some MGV8s have electric power steering fitted as a retrofit upgrade, often on RV8s. Here Victor Smith **highlights four tips**.

## Using a battery conditioner

With a classic car like an MGV8 doing typically 2,000 to 5,000 miles a year, that is significantly lower than say 8,000 to 12,000 miles seen with a modern car with more frequent use. So a classic car will tend to spend time, sometimes for extended periods in the Winter months, parked up in a garage with the engine only occasionally run as a maintenance routine. So helping to maintain the battery during those lay-up periods is essential.

Many owners do that by connecting a battery conditioner using a plug in the live cigar lighter socket which monitors the battery and automatically charges it for periods when necessary to maintain a good level of charge. That helps support a longer lasting battery condition so you get the most from your vehicle's battery and extend its lifespan. But with a battery conditioner providing that reassurance it can be easy to forget how the batteries are ageing. So do put a reminder in your diary or on a calendar with the date the current battery or batteries were installed and then you will be aware of their age and the need for a replacement!
See popular battery conditioners & more


## 12v battery & alternator tester

Using a battery & alternator tester to make regular checks on the battery condition and the performance level of the alternator is a wise routine. A tester can spot issues and help you avoid making the mistake of overlooking the reduced battery performance as it ages. Following fitting two useful upgrades on an MGBGTV8 – two new Bosch 12v batteries and an uprated alternator – the readings on the tester were:

| | |
|---|---|
| Battery with ignition on but no engine running: | **12.5v** |
| Battery with engine running on idle | **14.3v** |
| Alternator with engine running on idle | **14.3v** |
| Battery – engine on idle with fans running | **13.6v** |
| Alternator – engine on idle with fans running | **13.6v** |

You can get a tester from Clarke International or Sealey. The tester (model no.CBAT2 & part no. 6260106) is available from Clarke International in Essex. More

## High output alternator as a replacement

In the V8 Newsletter in the April 2025 issue of Safety Fast! a useful item was included by the V8 Scribe Peter Berry on his fitting an uprated alternator to his MGBGTV8.

Peter referred to V8NOTE527 contributed by Colin Goodey which described how an uprated 75-amp alternator delivers about 10% more power at tick-over and in real terms. A test showed the twin cooling fans were spinning at over 200 rpm higher than with the standard AC Delco unit. Colin saw an improvement in the performance of the cooling fans, with the fans cycling rather than being permanently on in the warmer weather. V8 Newsletter

## Twin 12v batteries & an uprated alternator

Carrying out both a **twin 12v batteries in parallel upgrade and fitting an uprated 75 amp alternator** will be released as a new V8 Workshop Note soon.
Other workshop notes