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Cleaning Your Battery

To prevent tray corrosion and its associated problems, batteries must be cleaned and dried routinely. Sometimes minor spills or overflows of electrolyte occur due to overfilling. Instead of giving the battery a general cleaning at this time, the moisture can be removed with rags or paper towels. (These should be disposed of immediately.)

The frequency of a general cleaning depends upon two factors:

- How quickly dust, dirt, oil, and other foreign matter accumulate on the top of the battery
- How quickly the electrolyte spillage accumulates

When the top of a battery is dirty or looks damp, it is ready for a general cleaning. Cleaning could be necessary as often as every two weeks or as infrequently as every six months, depending on the battery's environment and the care it receives. To give a battery a general cleaning, use hot water with a commercially available neutralizing detergent solution.

DURING ANY CLEANING, BUT PARTICULARLY WHEN USING A NEUTRALIZING/DETERGENT SOLUTION, MAKE CERTAIN THAT ALL VENT CAPS ARE TIGHTLY IN PLACE.

Apply the solution to the top of the battery with a clean paintbrush, working it under the intercell connectors and the terminals to loosen the grime and neutralize the acid. If baking soda is in the solution, apply the mixture until the "fizzing" action stops. (An ammonia solution will not "fizz.") Then rinse the battery with clear, hot water from a low-pressure hose to remove all traces of the solution and loose dirt. Cold water works, but hot water cleans better.