



Best 12 volt battery monitor

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Although the deep cycle house batteries in your RV are designed to withstand up to 80 percent depth of discharge, that's only on paper. If you want your house battery to last longer and thus save money, try not to deplete your battery by over 50 percent.

To ensure this, you will need the best RV battery monitor to measure how much charge your battery has left at any given time, as well as other indications of battery performance and health.

To help you pick 12V battery monitors that suit your needs and budget without all the headache, here's an in-depth review of the 10 RV battery monitoring systems for ensuring optimal battery life. Learn how to use them, as well as crucial buying criteria and answers to common questions.

Perhaps one of the first things RV owners need to learn with regards to maintaining their home on wheels is the workings of their 12 volt house battery, and every related device and accessories designed to maximize battery's lifespan and performance.

A recap of Battery 101 lessons: you should try your best not to deplete your 12 volt battery bank down to less than 50 percent depth of discharge. Doing so once or twice would not kill the battery off, but the more this happens, the shorter the RV battery's lifespan.

This is utterly important, since a dead or malfunctioning house battery can leave you stranded in the middle of nowhere. It will also cost you hundreds of dollars to replace the battery bank, not to mention the money and time spent to rescue yourself from being stranded.

This is where a battery monitor for RV comes in. When installed, the monitor will constantly measure the state of discharge of your battery and display it on the screen as a percentage. You only need to mount the monitor in a high traffic area and glance at it every now and then to keep an eye on your battery bank.

There are two types of RV battery monitor systems: voltage-based systems and shunt-based systems. In summary, battery monitors that rely on shunts are more accurate. They cost a bit more than the simple voltage-based type, but it's totally worth it.

Voltage-based battery monitors, which are often called voltmeters, measure battery voltage in real time but can only estimate the state of charge based on voltage. This is not very accurate as voltage can fluctuate with changes in temperatures and humidity. This type of battery monitor can even produce slightly different results with two similar house battery banks.

While voltmeters are cheaper and simpler than the shunt based type, its voltage readings don't tell you



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anything about the battery's performance or your power consumption, other than the amount of voltage stored in the battery at a given time.

Voltmeters don't tell you how much power is consumed by your RV system, or whether your battery is charging or not and how fast when you are using a solar system or the alternator to top off your battery.

This information is all crucial in identifying overly power hungry or malfunctioning electrical devices or systems in your RV and shutting them off in critical times, or spotting any fault with the house battery itself before it's too late. Not knowing this information can leave you in the middle of nowhere with a prematurely dead battery.

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