Battery charger for lifepo4

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20 Amp Lithium Battery Charger, 12V and 24V Lifepo4,Lead-Acid (AGM/Gel/SLA..) ...

??Automatic Charging?Automatic detection of 12V or 24V battery, automatic ...

If you"ve recently purchased or are researching lithium iron phosphate batteries (referred to lithium or LiFePO4 in this blog), you know they provide more cycles, an even distribution of power delivery, and weigh less than a comparable sealed lead acid (SLA) battery. Did you know they can also charge four times faster than SLA? But exactly how do you charge a lithium battery, anyway?

Power Sonic recommends you select a charger designed for the chemistry of your battery. This means we recommend using a lithium charger, like the LiFe Charger Series from Power Sonic, when charging lithium batteries.

As you will learn in this blog, there are many similarities in the charging profiles of SLA and lithium. However, extra caution should be exercised when using SLA chargers to charge lithium batteries as they can damage, under charge, or reduce the capacity of the lithium battery over time. There are many differences when comparing lithium and SLA batteries.

Let"s go back to the basics of how to charge a sealed lead acid battery. The most common charging method is a three-stage approach: the initial charge (constant current), the saturation topping charge (constant voltage), and the float charge.

In Stage 1, as shown above, the current is limited to avoid damage to the battery. The rate of change in voltage continually changes during Stage 1 eventually beginning to plateau when the full charge voltage limit is approached. The constant current/Stage 1 portion of the charge is crucial before moving onto the next stage. Stage 1 charging is typically done at 10%-30% (0.1C to 0.3C) current of the capacity rating of the battery or less.

Stage 2, constant voltage, begins when the voltage reaches the voltage limit (14.7V for fast charging SLA batteries, 14.4V for most others). During this stage, the current draw gradually decreases as the topping charge of the battery continues. This stage terminates when the current falls below 5% of the battery"s rated capacity. The last stage, the float charge, is necessary to keep the battery from self-discharging and losing capacity.

Stage 3 is used if the battery is being used in a standby application, the float charge is necessary to ensure the battery is at full capacity when the battery is called upon to discharge. In an application where the battery is in storage, float charging keeps the SLA battery at 100% State of Charge (SOC), which is necessary to prevent sulfating of the battery that therefore prevents damage to the plates of the battery.

Stage 1 battery charging is typically done at 30%-100% (0.3C to 1.0C)current of the capacity rating of the battery. Stage 1 of the SLA chart above takes four hours to complete. The Stage 1 of a lithium battery can take as little as one hour to complete, making a lithium battery available for use four times faster than SLA. Shown in the chart above, the Lithium battery is charged at only 0.5C and still charges almost 3 times as fast! As shown in the chart above, the Lithium battery is charged at only 0.5C and still charges almost 3 times as fast!

Stage 2 is necessary in both chemistries to bring the battery to 100% SOC. The SLA battery takes 6 hours to complete Stage 2, whereas the lithium battery can take as little as 15 minutes. Overall, the lithium battery charges in four hours, and the SLA battery typically takes 10. In cyclic applications, the charge time is very critical. A lithium battery can be charged and discharged several times a day, whereas a lead acid battery can only be fully cycled once a day.

Where they become different in charging profiles is Stage 3. A lithium battery does not need a float charge like lead acid. In long-term storage applications, a lithium battery should not be stored at 100% SOC, and therefore can be maintained with a full cycle (charged and discharged) once every 6 – 12 months and then storage charged to only 50% SoC.

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