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Battery Tenders are Must-haves for Classic Cars

A battery tender is a device that connects a standard alternating current (AC) outlet to a 12-volt battery in order to make sure that your battery does not become inoperative when it's left alone for extended periods of time. Battery tenders are routinely used to protect and maintain batteries from vehicles that are only used seasonally, and therefore are inactive for most of the year. They are also frequently used by the U.S. military to maintain batteries in weapons systems and vehicles between training events and deployments.

Battery tender/maintainer units are also must-haves when it comes to collector and classic cars and any other car that doesn't get driven much. Depending on how old a battery is and its condition, it's possible for a battery to lose 90 percent of its charge in just two

months of idleness. Further, manufacturer records show that proper use of a good battery tender or maintenance unit can extend vehicle battery life by as much as 3 times.

If you plan to leave the battery hooked up to the tender for a long time, look for a "smart tender." These units have circuitry that detect when your battery is fully charged, and will shut off the power to your battery at that point in order to prevent "boil off." They will also shut off when they detect a short circuit. Prominent manufacturers of smart tender units include Deltran Corporation and VDC Electronics.

Safety and Best Practices

If you use a battery tender, be sure to follow these safety and usage tips:

- If you must use an extension cord, use only sturdy, thick, drop-down cables that have the Underwriters Laboratories seal of approval on them.
- Disconnect the battery from the car. Only the tender should be connected to the battery.
- Check the tender regularly to ensure it is not becoming hot to the touch.
- Never use small-gauge extension cords that run along the floor, and keep cables away from areas they can be stepped on.
- Don't overload extensions or outlets. Don't plug too many battery tenders into a single outlet.
- Use a unit that will switch to float/maintenance mode when it detects your battery is fully charged. At that



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Discounts & More: Combining Your Auto & Home Insurance with One Company



There are huge advantages to combining your auto and home insurance with a single company. The biggest and most direct benefit is getting a multiple-policy discount. However, it goes beyond that, and the advantages can work out nicely in the policyholder's favor. Let's look at the numerous variables on why this really works to your advantage.

Discount

The combined auto-home or multipolicy discount, as some companies call it, can result in some real savings; in many cases, it can amount to hundreds of dollars per year. The best part of this is that the discount applies to both policies and, depending on the company, often ranges from 10% to 20% off the total price. Let's say you own three cars and a home. Your auto policy runs \$2500 per year and your home policy runs \$1000 per year. Let's further state that the auto discount is 10% and the home discount is 15%. This would result in \$250 off the auto insurance and \$150 off the home insurance. Combined, that's \$400 savings per year.

Single Online Portal

Most companies give you online access, and, when you combine

your policies, you only need one log to access all your documents and online needs. Nowadays, consumers have so many websites they need to access and so many passwords they need to save, having single access simply eliminates another portal that you may need access to. It also simplifies your life.

Umbrella Policy

Umbrella policies give you upper-tier liability coverage, and many companies require that you have both policies to qualify for these low-cost/high-coverage policies. If you have equity in your home, financial assets, and you make good wages, you would want to secure an umbrella policy in order to protect your assets and future earning power due to a catastrophic auto accident or serious liability incident that may occur in your home. Combining your auto and home is the starting point to qualify for this type of a policy.

With cost savings, a single point of contact, simplifying and qualifying for extra coverage, having a single company really goes a long way toward bringing great value to your insurance program. This is why insurance agents often times will recommend a single company and would want to quote your personal

insurance with one company. If you do not have your insurance with one company, you would likely do yourself a huge favor by asking your agent to either combine these or consolidate your insurance if you have more than one agent.

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- point it will reduce the amperage to the battery and/or turn off and on as needed to ensure your battery remains charged.
- Don't use cheap "trickle chargers," which can damage your battery if left unattended for a long period of time.
- Don't use desulphation or pulse chargers, which can damage the battery and void your warranty.
- In theory, you can leave a battery connected to a good smart tender, such as Delco's Battery Tender line, indefinitely. However, manufacturers recommend checking on your battery at least once every couple of weeks.
- Don't store batteries near heat sources or open flame.
- Don't allow charges in excess of 14.8 volts.
- Don't use lithium iron phosphate batteries in temperatures below 14 degrees Fahrenheit
- Keep batteries away from children and pets
- Discharge your battery completely before disposing of it.
- Remove jewelry, including necklaces, rings and bracelets when working with battery. Metal jewelry can cause a short circuit and cause severe burns to the wearer.
- If you're using the tender in an extreme temperature (such as an unheated garage in the winter) a smart tender is a must. Today's smart tenders have circuitry that detects ambient temperature and adjusts amperage accordingly in order to maintain batteries at the proper voltage levels.

is inside or within a few feet of the vehicle. If someone tries to start your vehicle without your external device, the car won't start.

Ravelco

If you want a state-of-the-art car ignition system and you're willing to make a semi-permanent installation in your car, then the Ravelco anti-theft device might be for you. The Ravelco relies on two 16-digit connectors unique to that car to complete the ignition circuit. One is installed in your vehicle, and the other goes with you in your pocket when you leave the car.

Each set of connectors is unique. With over 100,000 different possible 'combinations,' the Ravelco is nearly impossible for most thieves to hack. It doesn't require batteries, and there are no master plugs in existence – so professional thieves can't acquire one to facilitate their crimes.

The Ravelco comes with a hidden armored steel cable into the engine compartment, and all connections are camouflaged and hidden from thieves. Different installations can disable different circuits – the fuel pump, starter circuit, or even the computer can be disabled, unless the driver connector is present and properly connected.

Installation on exotic cars runs from \$499.95 and up. And thus far, we're not aware of a Ravelco car that's been successfully stolen yet.

Tire and wheel locks

Many thieves aren't interested in the whole car: They're going after custom rims and high-end tires. And with a bit of practice, they can roll up with a rolling jack, a star wrench and a little elbow grease, and can have your wheels in the back of their van and on the way to their chop shop in minutes.

You can defeat these thieves in two ways:

- A locking lug nut, which you can install for as little as \$10 (though

the \$50 to \$70 ones are a lot tougher).

- A wheel lock, or "boot."

If you're defending some high-end custom rims and maintaining authenticity of a classic car is not a consideration, you might consider something like "The System," from Gorilla Auto. It costs some money, but every single wheel lug is a wheel lock – which should be enough to confound and frustrate most professional thieves, who would much rather be on their way within a few minutes.

Tracking and recovery systems

It's one thing to prevent a theft. But when the thief is able to defeat your front-end systems, or circumvents them by simply towing your classic car back to the chop shop, chances are you'll want a GPS tracking device to alert you to the theft, alert law enforcement, and lead them directly to the location of your car.

LoJack has been providing GPS tracking systems for cars and computers for years, and has recently developed a system designed for classic, custom and collectible cars.

The latest version of LoJack for Classic Cars has the following features and benefits:

- Self-powered. The newer LoJacks won't drain your battery, and render themselves ineffective when they've been parked for a long time.
- Installation is discreet, with no drilling required.
- LoJack will send you a text or email if your car is moved without an Early Warning Key, which you should store away from your car.
- Thus far, LoJack has the only

system that's directly integrated with state and local police (though not in every market). Police cars and helicopters in these areas are often equipped with trackers that enable them to follow your car's unique signal.

- Radio frequency technology – works in areas that don't have GPS or cell service.
- 90 percent of LoJack-equipped cars, trucks and SUVs are successfully recovered.
- No ongoing monthly fees.

Other vendors, like Fleetminder and Trackstop, have created Web-enabled devices and apps that enable you to remotely disable your vehicle's engine from your cell phone within seconds of discovering a theft.

For the best protection, combine systems and approaches

Most law enforcement experts recommend a multi-layered anti-theft strategy. Start with vehicle location: Don't park in poorly lit areas, behind buildings or other places thieves can find concealment and darkness to do their work.

Also combine different countermeasures to defeat against a variety of threats, from crooks who try to 'hot wire' vehicles to rim and wheel thieves to tow-truck operators. So you may want to use a combination of mechanical and electronic countermeasures, along with a solid tracking system to help recover your vehicle when other measures fail.



Protecting Your Custom or Classic Car From Theft – Combine New and Old Technologies

If you have an extraordinary car, it makes sense to take extraordinary measures to protect it – both by deterring thieves and by actively foiling their attempts at stealing the automobile. That said, most classic and restoration car owners also want to balance deterrence against being discreet and preserving the original condition of the car.

Aside from the obvious precautions like keeping your car locked and stored discreetly, here are some of the most effective devices and concepts that can help you protect your high-end custom, classic or hot rod automobile.

Steering wheel, brake pedal and wheel locks. These are quality, visible deterrents to theft that will thwart all but the most determined and prepared car thieves. They are inexpensive, and they are removable for car shows and competitions. You don't need to drill any holes in

the dash, and they don't need stickers on the windows to provide a significant deterrent.

In addition, you can try some basic mechanical tricks:

- Disconnect the battery cable
- Pulling a critical fuse, such as the fuel pump fuse

Note that basic mechanical tricks like this won't usually defeat a determined, professional car thief. The pros know all the basic tricks. All they have to do is show up with a tow truck and any of these measures can be easily defeated until they get the car back to their shop – where they usually just want the parts, anyway.



Electronic immobilizers

These are electronic devices that send a signal to key components to lock up or shut down unless you, the car owner, flip a 'kill switch' or use a special key. In recent years, RFID technology has enabled advanced kill switches that detect when your RFID or Bluetooth-enabled key fob or wallet

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