

**Contractor Report**

**SAND81-7135**

**Unlimited Release**

# **Handbook of Secondary Storage Batteries and Charge Regulators in Photovoltaic Systems Final Report**

Originally Printed August 1981

Prepared by

Exide Management and Technology Company, 19 West College Avenue,  
P.O. Box 336 Yardley, Pennsylvania 19067 (see note below).

Work Performed for

The U.S. Department of Energy Sandia National Laboratories  
Albuquerque, New Mexico 87185 Under Contract No. 13-2202

## **Editorial Note:**

This document was scanned from a printed copy by the Arizona Solar Center, Inc. in 2002. There may be format and character errors as a result of the scanning and conversion to text characters. Most of the figures are images. It is important to note that any prices are in 1981 US Dollars. No conversion rate for current date is given. Most of the technology presented remains valid. In 2002 the Charge Retaining batteries were no longer readily available. Many brand name have changed over the years. The Exide management and Technology Company responsible for this report is not the Exide Technologies company headquartered in Lombard, Ill. in 2002 (Exide of 1981 became Yuasa-Exide, which became Yuasa, and was last known as Energsys in 2002).

Editorial changes made in 2002 by the Arizona Solar Center, Inc. are shown in this red font.

## **DISCLAIMER**

This report was prepared as an account of work sponsored by an agency of the United States Government. Neither ESB Incorporated (a.k.a. as Exide in 1981), the United States Government, or any agency thereof, nor any of their employees, make any warranty, express or implied, or assume any legal liability or responsibility for the accuracy, completeness, or usefulness of any information, apparatus, product, or process disclosed or represent that its use would not infringe privately owned rights. Reference herein to any specific commercial product, process, or service by trade name, mark, manufacturer, or otherwise, does not necessarily constitute or imply its endorsement, recommendation, or favoring by ESB Incorporated, the United States Government or any agency thereof. The views and opinions of authors expressed herein do not necessarily state or reflect those of ESB Incorporated, the United States Government or any agency thereof.

## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Acknowledgment is given to the following individuals who have contributed to the preparation of this handbook as authors, editors, reviewers and technical/test investigators.

Sandia National Laboratories, Albuquerque, New Mexico

Donald M. Bush  
Jay L. Chamberlin  
Robert P. Clark  
Jerry L. Watkins

Motorola, Inc., Government Electronics Division, Scottsdale, Arizona  
Gary Husa

Exide Management and Technology Company, Yardley, Pennsylvania

D. L. Beals  
A. M. Chreitzberg J. B. Doe  
D. T. Ferrell, Jr. J. J. Kelley  
F. P. Malaspina M. M. Sipe  
E. A. Wagner

Exide Corporation 101 Gibraltar Road, Harsham, Pennsylvania )

G. P. Cook

Exide Corporation 2510 North Blvd., Raleigh, North Carolina

A. Alexander J. Fox

**2002 Editing by:**

**W. J. Kaszeta      Photovoltaic Resources International**

**L. S. Garrett      ETA Engineering**

## **ABSTRACT**

Solar photovoltaic systems often require battery subsystems to store reserve electrical energy for times of zero insolation. This handbook is designed to help the system designer make optimum choices of battery type, battery size and charge control circuits. Typical battery performance characteristics are summarized for four types of lead-acid batteries: pure lead, lead-calcium and lead-antimony pasted flat plate and lead-antimony tubular positive types. Similar data is also provided for pocket plate nickel cadmium batteries.

Economics play a significant role in battery selection. Relative costs of each battery type are summarized under a variety of operating regimes expected for solar PV installations.

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

|                   |   | <u>Page</u> |
|-------------------|---|-------------|
| DISCLAIMER        |   | i           |
| ACKNOWLEDGMENTS   |   | li          |
| ABSTRACT          |   | lii         |
| TABLE OF CONTENTS |   | iv          |
| LIST OF FIGURES   |   |             |
| LIST OF TABLES    |   |             |
| <br>              |   |             |
| Chapter 1         | Introduction, Summary and Goals of Handbook                             | 1-1         |
| Chapter 2         | General Information for Selection of Batteries for Photovoltaic Systems | 2-1         |
|                   | Components and Functions  | 2-1         |
|                   | Key Elements in Battery Selection                                       | 2-5         |
|                   | References  | 2-9         |
| Chapter 3         | Lead-Acid Batteries   | 3-1         |
|                   | Cell Design and Theory  | 3-1         |
|                   | Lead-Acid Battery Construction Types                                    | 3-2         |
|                   | Lead-Acid Cell Discharge Characteristics                                | 3-9         |
|                   | Effect of Specific Gravity of Electrolyte and Operating Temperature     | 3-14        |
|                   | Methods of Charging Lead-Acid Batteries                                 | 3-17        |
|                   | Maximum Battery Subsystem Voltage                                       | 3-21        |
|                   | Stratification of Electrolyte in Cells                                  | 3-24        |
|                   | Selection of Charge Currents  | 3-26        |
|                   | Effect of Cell Design on Battery Life                                   | 3-31        |
|                   | Effect of Operating Parameters on Battery Life                          | 3-32        |
|                   | Environmental Effects on Battery Life                                   | 3-34        |
|                   | Maintenance of Lead-Acid Batteries                                      | 3-39        |
|                   | Watering Cells  | 3-40        |
|                   | Safety Precautions  | 3-42        |
|                   | Safety Rules to Avoid Chemical Burns and Shock Hazards                  | 3-44        |
|                   | References  | 3-45        |

TABLE OF CONTENTS (Continued)

|           |   |              |
|-----------|---|--------------|
| Chapter 4 | Nickel-Cadmium Batteries  | 4-1          |
|           | Chemistry and Construction  | 4-1          |
|           | Discharge Characteristics of NiCd Cells   | 4-4          |
|           | Charging Characteristics  | 4-8          |
|           | Operating and Charged Stand life  | 4-11         |
|           | Maintenance and Safety Precautions  | 4-13         |
|           | References  | 4-15         |
| Chapter 5 | Battery Costs in Solar Photovoltaic Systems   | 5-1          |
|           | Lead-Acid System Energy Costs   | 5-3          |
|           | Nickel-Cadmium System Energy Cost   | 5-13         |
|           | Summary of Annual and Stored Energy Cost<br>Estimates                                     | 5-16         |
|           | References  | 5-19         |
| Chapter 6 | Chargers and Voltage Regulators   | 6-1          |
|           | Basic Voltage Regulator   | 6-2          |
|           | Photovoltaic System Battery Charge Control  | 6-6          |
|           | Series Pass Voltage Regulator   | 6-9          |
|           | Shunt Regulators  | 6 -11        |
|           | Switching Regulators  | 6-13         |
|           | Step-Down Series-Switch Converter/Regulator   | 6-15         |
|           | Step-Up Shunt Switch Converter/Regulator  | 6-18         |
|           | Comparison of Voltage Regulators Series-Pass<br>Voltage Regulator Shunt Voltage Regulator | 6-23<br>6-24 |
|           | Step-Down Series Switch Regulator   | 6-25         |
|           | Step-Up Shunt Switching Regulator   | 6-27         |
|           | Cost/Performance Trade-Offs   | 6-28         |
|           | References  | 6-30         |

TABLE OF CONTENTS (Continued)

|              |  |      |
|--------------|--|------|
| Chapter 7    | Selection of Battery for Photovoltaic System                             | 7-1  |
|              | Shallow Cycle Service  | 7-1  |
|              | Deep Cycle Service   | 7-1  |
|              | Standby Service Versus Cycle Service                                     | 7-2  |
|              | Application Data Summary Form  | 7-6  |
| Appendix A   | Typical Performance Characteristics of Lead-Acid Cells and Batteries     | A-1  |
| Appendix A-1 | Pure Lead Charge Retaining Batteries. (110-600 Ah)                       | A1-1 |
| Appendix A-2 | Lead-Calcium Pasted Flat Plate Cells (50-200 Ah)                         | A2-1 |
| Appendix A-3 | Lead-Calcium Pasted Flat Plate Cells (1850-3700 Ah)                      | A3-1 |
| Appendix A-4 | Lead-Antimony Pasted Flat Plate Cells (50-200 Ah)                        | A4-1 |
| Appendix A-5 | Lead-Antimony Pasted Flat Plate Cells (110-900 Ah)                       | A5-1 |
| Appendix A-6 | Lead-Antimony Tubular Positive Cells and Batteries (220-1820 Ah)         | A6-1 |
| Appendix B   | Typical Performance Characteristics of Nickel-Cadmium Pocket Plate Cells | B-1  |
| Appendix B-1 | Typical Performance Characteristics of Nickel-Cadmium Pocket Plate Cells | B1-1 |

## LIST OF FIGURES

| <u>Figure</u> | <u>Title</u>  | <u>PAGE</u> |
|---------------|---|-------------|
| 2-1           | Components of Solar Photovoltaic System   | 2-2         |
| 2-2           | Solar Array vs. System Load Power Requirement   | 2-8         |
| 3-1           | Manchex Type  | 3-4         |
| 3-2           | Tubular Positive Type   | 3-6         |
| 3-3           | Flat Pasted Plate   | 3-7         |
| 3-4           | Effect of Discharge Rate on Output at 25°C  | 3-10        |
| 3-5           | Cell Discharge Characteristics  | 3-13        |
| 3-6           | Effect of Discharge Temperature Rate and Specific Gravity on Output Capacity                        | 3-15        |
| 3-7           | Effect of Discharge Rate and Temperature on 25°C Discharge Capacity                                 | 3-16        |
| 3-8           | Effect of Depth of Discharge and Number of Cycles per Year on Wet Life, 25°C                        | 3-33        |
| 3-9           | Effect of Cell Design and Discharge Depth on Estimated Cycle Life of Lead-Acid Cells at 25°C        | 3-35        |
| 3-10          | Relative Local Action of Cells of Different Construction  | 3-36        |
| 3-11          | Effect of Cell Temperature on Capacity Loss During Charged Stand (Pure Lead Charge Retaining Cells) | 3-37        |
| 4-1           | Effect of Discharge Rate on Capacity and Voltage Regulation   | 4-4         |
| 4-2           | Effect of Operating Temperature on Discharge Capacity   | 4-6         |
| 4-3           | Constant Current Charge of Pocket Plate Nickel-Cadmium Cell at 20A/100 Ah, 25°C                     | 4-9         |



LIST OF FIGURES (Continued)

| <u>Figure</u> | <u>Title</u>   | <u>PAGE</u> |
|---------------|--|-------------|
| 5-1           | Shallow Cycle Life of Low Rate, Pure Lead Flat Plate Cells, Charge Retaining Type, 110-600 Ah Size Range                                   | 5-9         |
| 6-1           | Basic Regulator Block Diagram  | 6-3         |
| 6-2           | Control Element Configurations   | 6-5         |
| 6-3A          | Cell Voltage and Current During Charge   | 6-6         |
| 6-3B          | Typical Solar Array Current Vs. Voltage Output   | 6-7         |
| 6-4           | Basic Series - Pass Voltage Regulator. Q1 is an Electronically Controlled Variable Resistance in Series with the Load                      | 6-10        |
| 6-5           | Basic Shunt Regulator  | 6-12        |
| 6-6           | Basic Switching Regulators   | 6-13        |
| 6-7           | (a) Switching Voltage Converter Average Output Voltage<br>(b) Switching Voltage Converter with LC Filter and Diode                         | 6-16        |
| 6-8A          | A Shunt Switch Voltage Step-Up Converter   | 6-19        |
| 6-8B          | Addition of a Feedback Loop to Build a Step-Up Switching Converter   | 6-22        |
| A-1-1         | Discharge Voltage vs. Percent Time to End Voltage, 11 to 500 Hour Discharge Rate, 110, 220, and 600 Ah Cells, 1.300 Specific Gravity, 25°C | A-1-2       |
| A-1-2         | Energy Density per Unit Weight, Charge Retaining 110, 220 and 600 Ah Cells vs. Discharge Rate, 10-500 h, 25°C                              | A-1-2       |
| A-1-3         | Energy Density per Unit Volume, Charge Retaining 110, 220 and 600 Ah Cells vs. Discharge Rate, 10-500 h, 25°C                              | A-1-2       |

LIST OF FIGURES (Continued)

| <u>Figure</u> | <u>Title</u>   | <u>PAGE</u> |
|---------------|--|-------------|
| A-2-1         | Cell Voltage vs. Percent Time to Final Voltage of 50-200 Ah Cells at 25°C, 1.215 Specific Gravity Sulfuric Acid      | A-2-3       |
| A-2-2         | Energy Density per Unit Weight vs. Discharge Rate (Hours) at 25°C, 50-200 Ah Cells, 1.215 Specific Gravity Acid      | A-2-3       |
| A-2-3         | Energy Density per Unit Volume vs. Discharge Rate (Hours) at 25°C, 50-200 Ah Cells, 1.215 Specific Gravity Acid      | A-2-3       |
| A-3-1         | Discharge Cell Voltage vs. Percent of Time to 1.75 Volts End Voltage, 1,3,8 and 500 Hour Discharge Rate, 25°C        | A-3-3       |
| A-3-2         | Energy Density per Unit Weight vs. Discharge Rate, 1-500 Hours, 25°C   | A-3-3       |
| A-3-3         | Energy Density per Unit Volume vs. Discharge Rate, 1-500 Hours, 25°C   | A-3-3       |
| A-4-1         | Discharge Voltage vs. Percent Time to End Voltage of 1.75 Volts at 1,8 and 500 Hour Rate, 25°C                       | A-4-3       |
| A-4-2         | Energy Density per Unit Weight vs. Discharge Rate, Hours, 25°C   | A-4-3       |
| A-4-3         | Energy Density per Unit Volume vs. Discharge Rate, Hours, 25°C   | A-4-4       |
| A-4-4         | Wet Life and Cycle Life vs. % Depth of Discharge, 25°C   | A-4-4       |
| A-6-1         | Discharge Voltage vs. Percent Time to End Voltage of 1.75 Volts per Cell at 25°C at 1, 8 and 500 Hour Discharge Rate | 1-6-2       |
| A-6-2         | Wet Cycle Life vs. Percent Depth of Discharge, 200-A-6-2 400 Ah Tubular Positive Cells, 1.28 Specific Gravity, 25°C  | A-6-2       |

## LIST OF TABLES

| <u>Table</u> | Title  | Page |
|--------------|--|------|
| 3-1          | Cell Discharge Characteristics   | 3-12 |
| 3-2          | Freezing Points of Sulfuric Acid Electrolyte   | 3-14 |
| 3-3          | Correction Factors for Cell Gassing Voltage  | 3-22 |
| 3-4          | Battery Subsystem Voltage vs. System Window (200 - 300 Volts)  | 3-23 |
| 3-5          | Effect of Age of Lead-Antimony Battery on End-of- Charge<br>Current and Voltage  | 3-27 |
| 3-6          | Effect of Discharge Depth, Initial Charge Rate at 2.39 VPC and<br>Finishing Rate on Charge Time  | 3-28 |
| 3-7          | Effect of Initial Charge Current and Constant Potential on Charge<br>Time for 60 and 80% Depth of Discharge                                      | 3-29 |
| 4-1          | Electrolyte Freezing Temperature   | 4-7  |
| 4-2          | Modified Constant Potential Charge Input vs. Rate of Charge<br>Intermediate Rate Pocket Plate Cells  | 4-10 |
| 5-1          | Energy Output and Delivered Energy Cost 500-200 Ah Pasted<br>Flat Plate Lead-Calcium Batteries   | 5-4  |
| 5-2          | Energy Output and Delivered Energy Cost 1020-3700 Ah Pasted<br>Flat Plate Lead-Calcium Batteries   | 5-5  |
| 5-3          | Energy Output and Delivered Energy Cost 50-200 Ah Pasted Flat<br>Plate Lead-Antimony Batteries   | 5-6  |
| 5-4          | Energy Output and Delivered Energy Cost vs. Discharge Rate and<br>Operating Temperature, Lead-Antimony Pasted Flat Plate Cells<br>(1020-3700 Ah) | 5-7  |
| 5-5          | Energy Output and Delivered Energy Cost Pure Lead Low Rate<br>Charge Retaining Batteries (110- 600 Ah)   | 5-8  |

LIST OF TABLES (Continued)

| <u>Table</u> | <u>Title</u>  | <u>Page</u> |
|--------------|---|-------------|
| 5-6          | Energy Output, Delivered and Stored Energy Cost 220~770 Ah<br>Lead-Antimony Tubular Positive Motorized Truck Cells  | 5-10        |
| 5-7          | Energy Output, Delivered and Stored Energy Cost 760-2130 Ah<br>Lead Antimony, Tubular Positive General Purpose Cells  | 5-11        |
| 5-8          | Energy Output, Delivered and Stored Energy Cost 225-1200 Ah<br>Lead-Antimony, Pasted Flat Plate Motive Power Cells  | 5-12        |
| 5-9          | Energy Output, Delivered and Stored Energy Cost 6 Volt Electric<br>Vehicle Type Lead-Antimony Flat Plate Batteries  | 5-14        |
| 5-10         | NiCd Pocket Plate Cell Output Energy and Stored Energy Costs<br>vs. Discharge Rate  | 5-15        |
| 5-11A        | Summary of Battery Subsystem Annual Energy Costs Lead-Acid<br>System and Stored   | 5-17        |
| 5-11B        | Summary of Battery Subsystem Annual and Stored Energy Costs<br>Nickel-Cadmium System  | 5-18        |
| 6-1          | Normalized Cost/Performance Trade-Offs  | 6-31        |
| A-1-1        | Discharge Energy Output vs. Discharge Rate 600 Ah Low Rate<br>Charge Retaining Cells 25°C   | A-1-3       |
| A-2-1        | Energy Density vs. Discharge Rate and Operating Temperature<br>Lead-Calcium Flat Plate Cells 50-200 Ah  | A-2-2       |
| A-3-1        | Energy Density vs. Discharge Rate and Operating Temperature<br>Lead-Calcium Flat Plate Cells 1020-3700 Ah   | A-3-2       |
| A-4-1        | Energy Output and Energy Density per Unit Weight and Volume<br>at -18,0 and 25°C vs. Discharge Rate 1, 8 and 500 Hours to 1.75<br>Volts per Cell, 50-200 Ah Cells | A-4-2       |

LIST OF TABLES (Continued)

| <u>Table</u> | <u>Title</u>   | <u>Page</u> |
|--------------|--|-------------|
| A-5-1        | Discharge Voltage vs. Discharge Rate and Depth of Discharge, Motive Power Cells, 25°C.   | A-5-2       |
| A-5-2        | Energy Output, Energy Density vs. Discharge Rate, 3, 8, and 72-Hours, Motive Power Cells, 25°C.  | A-5-3       |
| A-5-3        | Wet Life and Cycle Life vs. Depth of Discharge, A-5-4 Motive Power Cells at 25°C.  | A-5-5       |
| A-5-4        | Discharge Capacity, Energy Output, and Energy Density, 25°C, 6 Volt Electric Vehicle Type Batteries  | A-6-2       |
| A-6-1        | Energy Output 6-Hour Rate, Energy Density vs. Operating Temperature, -18, 0 and 25°C for 12 V Motorized Hand Truck Batteries.                        | A-6-5       |
| A-6-2        | Energy Output, Average Voltage, Energy Density vs. Discharge Rate, 1, 8, 100 and 500 Hours 25°C General Purpose Tubular Positive Cells, 760-1820 Ah. | B-1 -2      |
| A-6-3        | Energy Output, Energy Density vs. Discharge Rate 6, 12 and 72-Hours, 25°C Tubular Positive Motive Power Cells, 510-1200 Ah.                          | A-6-5       |
| A-6-4        | Wet Life and Cycle Life vs. Depth of Discharge, A-6-6 Tubular Positive Industrial Truck Cells, 25°C.   | A-6-6       |
| B-1-1        | Discharge Voltage vs. Discharge Rate and Depth of Discharge, 25°C.   | B-1-2       |
| B-1-2        | Charge Efficiency of Pocket Plate Nickel- Cadmium Cells, 25°C.   | B-1-2       |
| B-1-3        | Energy Output, Energy Density vs. Discharge Rate, 1, 5, 10, 50, 500 Hours, 7.5-480 Ah Cells, 25°C.   | B-1-3       |
| B-1-4        | Charged Stand Loss Rates at 22 and 49°C.   | B-1-4       |