

IS THAT GAS YOU SMELL?



In this case, it's what you can't smell that can hurt you--hydrogen gas escaping from your lead-acid batteries. Don't do anything foolish that would make this stuff flare up.

The smallest of sparks can set off an explosion that could make the battery act like a bursting hand grenade.

Here are some tips for everybody to memorize:

- Never, never light a match or smoke while working around batteries.
- Keep a watchful eye on battery cable wear. They can get chafed until a short-circuit is started and has a sparking good time.
- Do not jerk or pull on battery cables or terminals.
- Always remove the ground clamp before you take the battery out and always put it on after you put the battery back in.
- Be 'specially careful when you take the battery off the charger, as the fumes'll be greater. Natch, if the batteries are still on the charger, they're doubly dangerous. Before unhooking batteries from your charger, **TURN IT OFF.** This'll lessen the possibility of a spark when you unhook the terminals.
- When you put batteries in a vehicle, make sure they're connected right so you get the right voltage and polarity. If you're not sure how to hook up the cables, dig out the vehicle's TM and look it up.
- At the first sign of an overcharged battery—it drinks too much water (more than an ounce a week per cell)—get the generator/alternator checked for putting out too much juice.

