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Battery management professionals have developed sophisticated monitoring programmes for monitoring the life and performance of large batteries associated with emergency power supplies.

Mr. Geoff Scott of Parmatrada, the engineer associated with their development says, "The heart of any monitoring and management programme is a thorough visual inspection of the system using check sheets which highlight the various areas to be observed".

With vented lead acid battery systems data logging of the main parameters of electrolyte specific gravity, cell voltage and charging current are undertaken using laptop computers and the information is then transferred to spread sheets for interpretation and assessment. Similar criteria are used for Nicad and sealed lead acid batteries.

This method of inspection can often avoid the costly procedure of instituting a full load test programme which quite often is an expensive exercise in confirming the obvious.

During final assessment it is not uncommon to discuss problems with the owner and the battery supplier to sort out existing or potential problems.

In recent times battery manufacturers have been willing to offer extended warranty programmes and early detection of problems or potential problems allows the battery owner to negotiate with the supplier for prompt remedial action which can extend the useful life of the battery by many years.

Mr. Scott says, "There are systems still in use in Australia which are so under maintained that it is doubtful if they would provide backup at all in an emergency". Well maintained batteries in the right environment can be relied upon to provide reliable backup service for 20 years or more.

When the time comes for replacement independent advice will assist in choosing the correct battery often producing significant savings and extended life.

Parmatrada with a background in power stations, DC systems and working inside the battery supply industry brings independent professional expertise to what many engineers regard as a black art or a little understood area of engineering. Parmatrada are now entering their third year of providing battery management services, with power station battery management contracts in place for the next two years.

If you have any enquiries regarding this news item please contact Mr Geoffrey Scott, via email gscott@parmatrada.com.au