

Wheels: An e-mail from Annie states, “The 60-month battery in my 1990 Olds is 4 years and 7 months old. I had it and the vehicle’s charging system checked. The system is fine but the battery tested at 458 cold cranking amps instead of the 550 CCA it is supposed to have. The tech advised me to remove the battery and put a charger on it overnight. Since the battery is not holding a full charge from the vehicle’s charging system, why would charging it out of the car help? Can I leave the battery in the car to do the charging?”

Halderman: The fact that your battery has lost some of its capacity is perfectly normal. In fact, I am surprised that the battery had as high a percentage of capacity as it did after four years. I would recommend not doing anything but keep checking the battery regularly for signs of weakness. These signs include:

- Slower than normal cranking speed
- Dimmer than normal headlights at idle
- Using battery water in one or more cells
- Corrosion on battery cables or terminals

The service technician is correct by saying it is safer to charge the battery out of the vehicle because the higher voltage from the charger could affect some computer circuits. You can charge a battery with it still in the vehicle. Again, your battery is normal and should provide you with a year or more of service. The normal life of a battery is generally considered to be 4 to 6 years. Just remember that batteries do wear out and your battery is about 65 years old in battery years.

