

### THE RESULTS ARE IN ...

In November 2003 we mailed out a customer service survey as part of our Quality Control and Continuous Improvement program. We appreciate the time our customers spent responding to the survey, as that will help us improve in the areas most important to you.

*Here are a few highlights from your responses:*

#### What do you like most about working with MK Battery?

"The overall ease & comfort of knowing that they will be here, they will be right and they will work"

"Excellent service" "Ease of ordering" "Pickup of spent batteries" "how helpful the staff is"

"Outstanding service - our delivery day is every Monday. I always get a call from our Rep the Friday before to see what I need"

#### What new products or services would you like to see MK add?

"Specialty batteries for ventilators, etc."

*Editors note: this was a frequent request; we have now expanded our product line to include items for use in these applications.*

"Delivery more then every other week" "Closer service"

*Editors note: We hear you and are always looking for the next area(s) to improve service upon, we currently have 20 U.S. distribution sites, look for us to continue to grow. Let us know where you need us to be to serve you better.*

#### What does MK Battery need to do to be more successful than the competition?

"You're the leader, be the leader and be our advocate w/Medicaid in regards to pricing"

*Editors note: MK provides industry support, both financially and through participation with many state and national organizations. Need support in your area, contact us for technical and lobbying assistance in your area. See related article in this newsletter.*

"Work hand in hand with our mobility manufacturers"

*Editors note: We participate with most mobility manufacturers with regard to quality, design and reimbursement coverage issues, we would like to do even more, thank you for the suggestion.*

#### Rate the MK Battery sales Representative:

"Always a pleasure to work with-we consider MK as a vendor partner"

"Excellent support from both telephone and delivery contacts"

#### Rate the Products from MK Battery:

"Best wheelchair batteries made" "In 30+ years I have used no other product"

*Editors note: MK has been in business since 1983.*

"Our battery problems in sales and service of P.O.V.s has dropped from 75% to less then 5% since we've switched to your products."

*Editors note: MK's no hassle warranty program experiences less then 1/2 of 1 % warranty replacements.*

#### Overall rating of MK Battery:

"I recommend your company and its products every chance I get!"

"Wish all companies ran like yours!"

*Editors note: Thank you for all the feedback and look for us to continue to improve in every area. Our next survey will be going out this summer, keep the suggestions and comments coming.*



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## SERVICE DEPARTMENT

### *Tip from the Tech...*

*"A chain is only as strong as its weakest link."* -

author unknown

Batteries are only one component of your wheelchair's power system. The other major component is the charger. You could have the best batteries made in your wheelchair, however, if your charger isn't functioning correctly or you have the wrong charger for the type of batteries installed, you will have nothing but problems.

If your charger constantly overcharges the batteries by charging at too high a voltage, the batteries will begin to gas to release excess pressure. The gases escaping are hydrogen and oxygen. These items recombine inside a valve-regulated battery (both GEL and AGM) to create water. Overcharging dries out the electrolyte by driving hydrogen and oxygen out of the battery through the safety valves. Due to a sealed battery's design, water cannot be added to the battery to compensate for this. Performance and life will be reduced.

Continually undercharging a battery can damage a battery as well. If a battery is continually undercharged, a power-robbing layer of sulfate will build up on the positive plate, which acts as a barrier to electron flow. Premature plate shedding can also occur.

### **Performance is reduced and life is shortened.**

Remember, batteries are only part of a wheelchair's battery system. If a customer complains about a battery problem, check the charger as well. A bad charger can lead to many battery problems.

## ***NEW "E" CODES FOR BATTERIES AND CHARGERS***

We all knew that the "K" codes would be disappearing. The following information is now being distributed by the Regional DMERC's and includes the new "E" codes for batteries and chargers.

There is a 3-month grace period for discontinued codes. This grace period applies to claims received by the DMERC before April 1, 2004, which include year 2003 discontinued codes for dates of service January 1, 2004 to March 31, 2004.

*The following table indicates deleted codes and the corresponding crosswalk code:*

<b><i>Deleted Code</i></b>	<b><i>Crosswalk Code</i></b>
K0082	E2360 22NF Wet Battery
K0083	E2361 M22NF SLD G
K0084	E2362 DC24 Wet Battery
K0085	E2363 M24 SLD G
K0086	E2364 U-1 Wet Battery
K0087	E2365 MU-1 SLD G
K0088	E2366 Battery Charger/Acid/Gel Cell
K0089	E2367 Battery Charger/Dual Mode

For a complete copy of code changes our customers can visit their DMERC website and look up the following HCPCS Bulletin:

### **Bul20031201 HCPCS**

If there is any expansion to the E codes for other size batteries we will pass on the information as it is received.

## **COMMODITY PRICES RISE SHARPLY!**

This is not the type of news we like to report. Metals prices, including lead, the main component in batteries, have risen sharply over the last year. Lead prices alone have risen 72% from last year's levels. The prices of copper, aluminum, steel, and other commodities have risen dramatically as well. We have been monitoring the added manufacturing cost associated with this and are doing our best to cope with the changes.

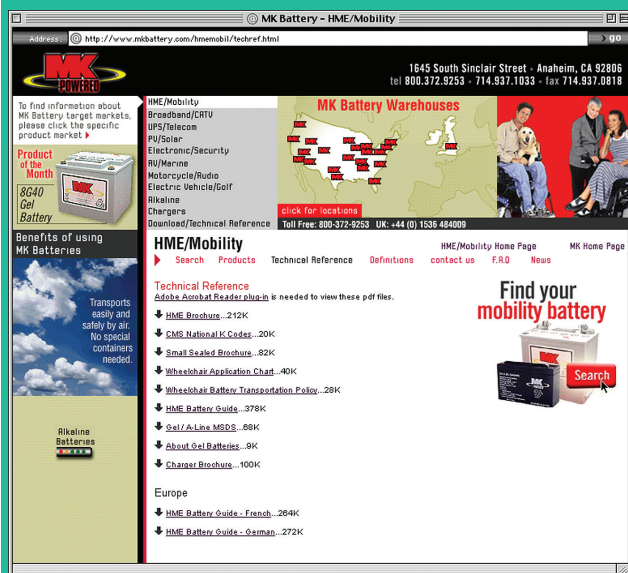
If you are a commodities speculator you may wish to watch the prices as posted on the London Metals Exchange (LME). The web address is: [www.lme.com](http://www.lme.com).



# MK Website...

MK Battery has been diligently working on making it easier to find the items you need on our website. In the past, you could find our Wheelchair Application Chart in one section of our site while the MSDS was located in another section.

To simplify your search, every item that you, the HME Dealer may need regarding MK batteries, can be found under the HME/Mobility Section of our website. From the Wheelchair Battery Transportation Policy to an HME Guide in German, all items are now easily found on our site. The most recent addition to the HME Section is the "F.A.Q.". (*Most Frequently Asked Questions*). The answers to some of your customer's questions are a click away.



If you would like to see something added to our website, please let us know by sending an E-mail to [liliat@mkbattery.com](mailto:liliat@mkbattery.com)

# MEDICAID

## MORE PROBLEMATIC THAN MEDICARE?

We are hearing that many State Medicaid programs are planning to roll back reimbursement rates on most HME related products or parts. Some of the proposed fee schedules we have seen will make it virtually impossible for dealers to provide repair services. Without reasonable reimbursement rates, consumers can expect a decline in service available for their mobility equipment and taxpayers can expect increased expenditures due to poor maintenance and repair. There is also the potential for increased hospitalization cost as safety problems become more prevalent.

An example of one state's approach is the situation in Vermont. There the current fee schedule that was to become effective 2/1/04 reduced reimbursement for U-1 and 22NF Sealed batteries to the level of their wet counterparts. Our industry has worked for many years to get unsafe, high maintenance, and difficult-to-transport wet batteries out of Mobility equipment.

There are many other states with similar issues such as California, Massachusetts, Connecticut, Minnesota, Texas, and others where funding issues are becoming major problems. In many cases program changes are more damaging than the "Medicare Reform" bill. Education continues to be a most important part of Industry strategy. MK Battery continues to provide financial, material, and physical support as we have done for many years in assisting these efforts. More than \$ 30,000 has gone into our efforts this past year and we are looking into other means to help assure continuing access to mobility technology for the future. We will have some new plans to unveil by Medtrade West for supporting the cause.

## NRRTS L.P.C. Schedule

A.C.E. - Advanced Clinical Education  
St. Louis Airport Marriott, St. Louis, MO

Thursday, August 5, 2004

Powered Mobility OR Manual Mobility

Friday, August 6, 2004

Pressure Mapping Side by Side, Mat Evaluations or Golf  
NRRTS L.P.C. - Leadership, Professionalism, Competence!

Friday, August 6, 2004, 3:00-7:00 p.m.

Motivational Speaker & Opening Reception

Saturday, August 7, 2004

Clinical Track

What If It Can't Be Fixed with Seating & Positioning?

OR

Professional Track

Operation Wheeler Dealer Is Not Just a Texas Problem

Both tracks together for:

What Affects Us Now?-Rita Hostak

Importance of Consumer-Provider Coalitions

Contact NRRTS at 800/976-7787 for more details.





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DEPEND ON***

**We'll See  
You  
At The Show**

## **MK BATTERY**

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NRRTS - Charter Corporate FON

RESNA (Rehab Engineering Society of N. America)

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March 17<sup>th</sup> - 18<sup>th</sup>, 2004**

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