

RCATS

Smart Lithium Glow Driver

The smart way to start your engine by Tyler Renkert

Ok, so I am a gadget geek: this we know. Well I just got my hands on a cool, gotta have, cannot live without, "Hey did you see this?" device for RC glow engines.

It is from RCATS, the same gadget guys that brought us the onboard telemetry gear that provides real time flight data to the ground crew. The RCATS glow driver has

brought the amazing performance of Li-Ion technology to the lowly old glow driver. Your glow plugs will thank you!

FEATURES

The unit is encased in a semi-clear blue plastic that lets the user see the "guts" inside. What does it do, you ask? There is a soft start feature incorporated so that the plug is not immediately pounded with voltage when it is turned on. This helps prolong plug life. The power behind it is a Li-Ion cell that seems to last forever. It is advertised to last a year or more on one charge. I think I'll retire my other glow drivers now that I have this one. It is always ready, and it confirms it is ready with a cool lighted readout to tell me how many amps the plug is drawing to remain lit. It won't lose electrons like traditional drivers that are powered by NiCd cells, and it will have a longer duration without the increased size. You can also turn off the driver while it's connected by squeezing the On button on the case. If you have been supporting a rich run with a lit plug, shutting off the power allows you to check the engine's operation without the driver being lit.

The unit has a long cord with a chrome-finished clip that attaches to the plug with a

SPECS

POWER: 2 Li-Ion cells, 4400mAh capacity

STREET PRICE: \$109

FEATURES: Built-in charger comes with wall plug adapter

snap (the production model will ship with a Du-Bro clip). The case is very compact and easily fits in a jacket pocket for quick access. The driver is equipped with a charging port.

HOW DOES IT WORK?

Awesome! I had a chance to use it on my Raptor helicopter. Once I had it connected, I pushed the on/off switch and the LED bar graph came to life, letting me know that I had a good connection drawing about two amps. Built-in circuitry allows the power to stay on for 45 seconds before it will turn off automatically. I tried to give it a dead short to see what would happen: it just turned off to protect the circuitry. I even put a glow plug in a glass of water connected to the driver to see what would happen: the meter just increased in its amperage reading and the plug stayed lit! What a cool device.

So throw away the antique drivers and move into the 21st century with the RCATS Lithium Glow Driver. ☺

Links

RCAT Systems, www.rcatsystems.com, (408) 292-9794.

For more information, please see our source guide on pg. 161.



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