



A New Horizon

Ansmann Rechargeable Batteries

by Mark Shrimplin

Woodmen Valley Chapel is a 35 year old, non-denominational community church with a contemporary flair that reaches a wide demographic range of people. Over 6,000 people, including a lot of military personnel, join us every week between two campuses.

We have 80 technical volunteers between two campuses, and rotate them on a monthly basis: 20 volunteers per weekend, scheduled once a month for our Saturday night service and two Sunday morning services. Between those two campuses, we have over 60 wireless devices, mostly microphones but also IEMs, guitar tuners, etc. We were spending over \$25 per week replacing old batteries, or around \$1,300 a year. We knew there had to be a better solution than merely replacing old batteries with new.

About seven years ago, we decided to purchase rechargeable batteries to use during our Christmas production. At the time, we had over 40 wireless mics being used for 12 performances and battery replacement costs would have been exorbitant! We quickly realized that the rechargeable batteries purchased from Horizon Battery paid for themselves over the course of the production. Of course, it was a no-brainer to switch entirely to rechargeable batteries afterwards.

We currently run over 100 batteries a week, and have 120 rechargeables in the inventory. We have 6 Energy-16 battery chargers, charging twelve AA and four 9 volt batteries at a time, and also a bunch of smaller smart chargers in classrooms. We use mostly AA Ansmann rechargeable batteries rated at 2850 mah (milli-amp-hour).

The Ansmann Energy chargers refresh and charge the batteries in about two hours, then switch to trickle charge mode allowing the batteries to remain in the charger. We

NOW:		THEN:	
\$240 spent yearly on rechargeables	60 new batteries purchased yearly	\$1300 spent yearly on alkalines	3000 batteries purchased yearly
Savings per Year: \$1060			

are able to use fully charged batteries all Sunday morning for six hours with no problems.

There was a slight learning curve when we first started using rechargeables. We had to get people used to them, remembering to put them back in the chargers at the end of service, and not throw them out when they were dead, which is what we'd been used to doing with the regular batteries. We quickly learned that if the batteries were left in the mics, they ended up getting tossed, and we wouldn't have enough rechargeable batteries for the next service.

When the rechargeables are brand new they need to be charged a few times before they can hold their full charge, so we've learned to break them in; charging them and letting them discharge a few times before they go into regular use. The smart chargers we purchased for the NinH batteries discharge them before they charge again, so we don't run into problems with forgetting to do this, since the gear does it for us.

I engrave the date on each rechargeable battery when it is purchased, so I know its age. We run new batteries for a year in the main worship center, and then rotate them into classrooms, etc., which gives us about two years out of all our batteries. We currently spend about \$240 a year for 60 batteries now, so we're saving a lot of money. We used to dump over 3,000 alkaline batteries a year, so we're also doing our bit to be environmentally friendly by using rechargeables.

It's important to note that many rechargeable AA batteries are a little bit larger than alkaline AAs, so keep that in mind if you decide to order rechargeables. We use the Ansmann Slimline AA's from Horizon Battery, which fit most of our mics well, but are still too tight in a few of our models.

Another little tip we've learned is that rechargeable batteries run a little lower voltage than alkaline batteries

do, so wireless battery indicators will often look like they're running down quickly. It's not true, there's a different type of "curve" on the way a rechargeable runs, so you have to ignore the initial indicator and not panic when the charge level drops quickly – it does level out!

Moving to rechargeable batteries was a good move for our church. In the long term, it's led to significant savings, and it's nice not having to run out to buy batteries every week, which we would just end

up throwing away, or having to keep track of our alkaline battery inventory. As long as we remember to put the rechargeable batteries back in the charger after use, we are good to go. If your facility has lots of wireless devices, what are you waiting for? Get rechargeables! They can't be beat.

Mark Shrimplin has spent 28 years in Technical Ministries, the last 18 years on staff as the Technical Arts Director at Woodmen Valley Chapel in Colorado Springs, CO.

MARK'S REPORT CARD	
Ansmann Rechargeable Batteries	
Ease of Use	3.5/5
Flexibility	4/5
Stability	4/5
Overall Value	5/5
Price	5/5

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