

# Green Light transponders keep going, and going. . .

A Salem Batteries Plus store is seeing a steady stream of orders to refurbish the transponders that truckers need for the Green Light weigh station preclearance program.

“We’ve been averaging about 120 a month,” said Technical Engineer Ed Hoscoe. “But last month one company alone sent in 140 for battery replacement.”

Transponders are powered by lithium batteries that last about seven years. The Salem Batteries Plus store opened its Truck Transponder Service Center in 2003 to meet the demand to give these Dedicated Short Range Communication devices additional lives. It installs a new battery and tests the electronics for \$14.99 per transponder, a price that includes return shipping by standard mail.

Since 1997, the Oregon Department of Transportation’s Motor Carrier Transportation Division (MCTD) has distributed over 46,000 transponders for its Green Light weigh station preclearance program. First it handed out a Raytheon Delco brand, then a Mark IV Industries brand, and now MCTD distributes a Telematics Wireless transponder. The vast majority of the first DELCO transponders have been refurbished and are still in use in Oregon today.

MCTD offers the devices at no-charge, but only for the first transponders a company obtains to get started in Green Light. Once a company has its transponders, it owns them and when the batteries die it is responsible for paying to either replace the batteries

or buy new transponders.

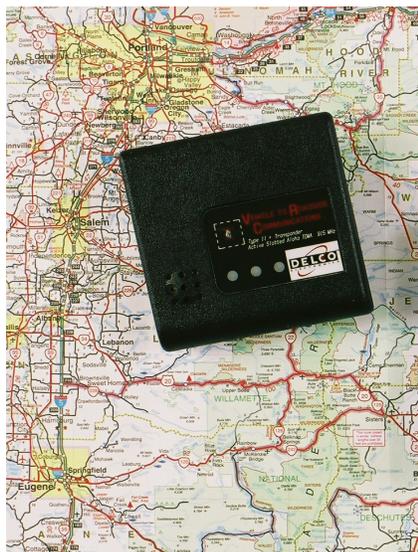
Replacing the battery in a transponder is not like changing batteries in a remote control. The device will only work with either the same type of lithium battery that was originally installed, as in the case of the DELCO Sanyo model battery, or with one of few comparable models, as in the case of the Mark IV and Telematics. These unique batteries are only available to battery suppliers and require a technician’s skill soldering wires to either battery end or to the transponder circuit board.

Hoscoe notes that his Service Center has found the blue Mark IV transponders to be especially tricky. The manufacturer purposefully added a tamper-prevention security feature that wipes out the device’s memory if the battery is disconnected. When

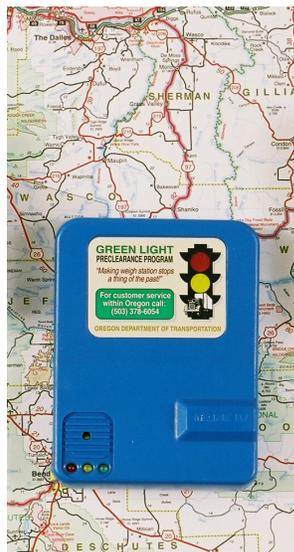
that device arrives at Batteries Plus, Hoscoe checks that the battery still has at least 1/2 volt of power so that it retained the ability to send its unique identifier signal. Then he must connect the device to a constant power source while disconnecting the old battery and installing a new one.

Transponder costs have steadily declined in recent years. The Washington State DOT currently sells them for \$30. Their transponders are just like Oregon’s in that they’re designed to work in the two other preclearance systems used in other states — NOR-PASS and PrePass — if the transponder owner enrolls the device and agrees to terms and conditions. For more about buying transponders, contact Washington DOT at 1-888-877-8567. For more about refurbishing transponders, contact the Transponder Service Center at 503-581-4890.

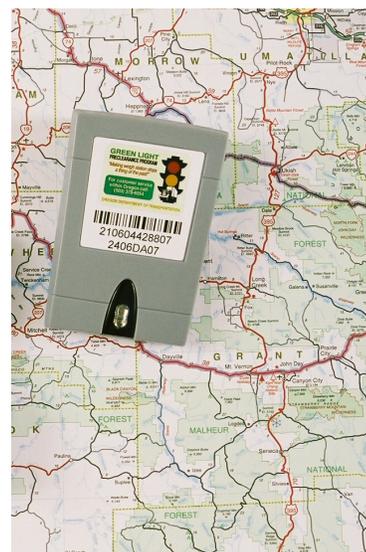
**Transponder Service Center  
Batteries Plus  
3045 Lancaster Dr NE  
Salem OR 97305  
503-581-4890**



The DELCO Type II+ was the first transponder used in Green Light. Oregon purchased 12,500 in 1997 and another 12,500 in 2001 at a cost of \$64 each. Many of the 25,000 total that were distributed are still in use after being refurbished by the Batteries Plus Transponder Service Center.



In 2003, Oregon purchased 20,000 Mark IV transponders at a cost of \$39 each. Many of these devices are starting to come in to the Transponder Service Center for battery replacement.



In 2007, Oregon purchased 6,000 Telematics transponders at a cost of \$25 each. More than 1,000 have been distributed and the remainder are now available for free to truckers who want to get started preclearing Oregon Green Light weigh stations.