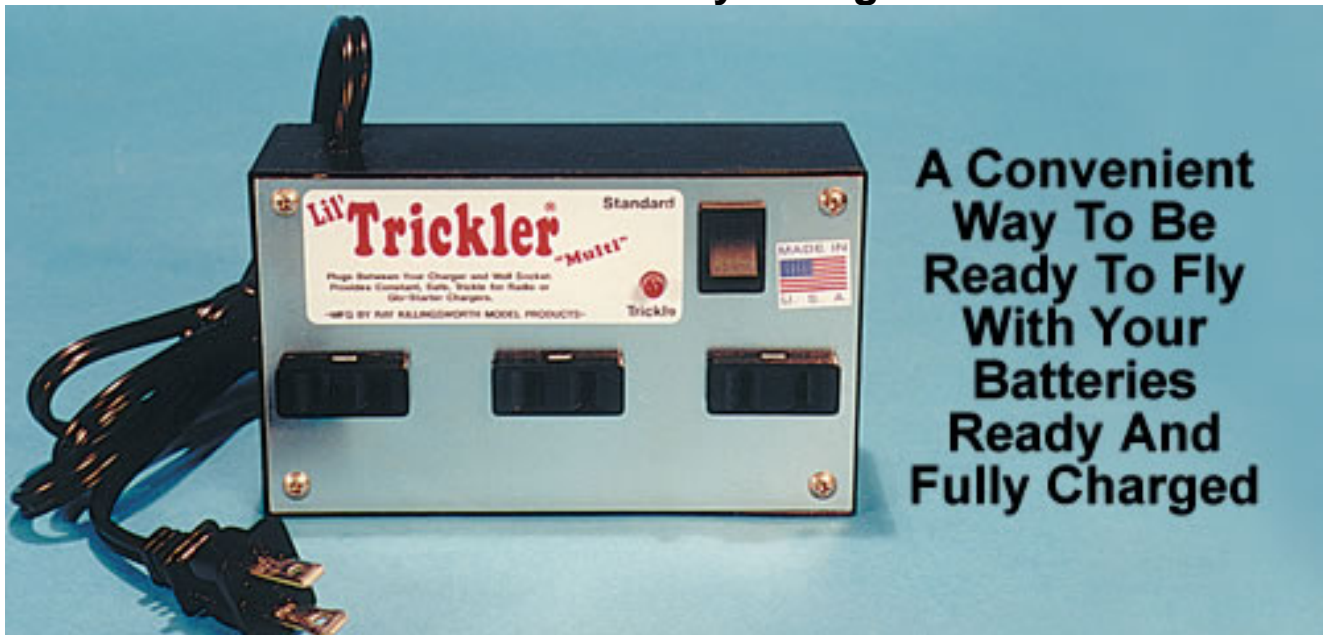


RCM PRODUCT REVIEW

LIL" TRIICKLER

RK Products

By George Steiner



**A Convenient
Way To Be
Ready To Fly
With Your
Batteries
Ready And
Fully Charged**

RK Products is producing an efficient device that you can plug into a wall AC receptacle and use your standard chargers that come with your R/C systems for a regular or trickle charge unit. It has a switch on the face plate shown in Photo #1 that can be placed in either the standard or trickle charge mode with an LED indication. The Lil' Trickler is not a timed device so the procedure is to place one or more of your systems on an overnight charge. Then after the batteries are fully charged, place the unit in the trickle mode by operation of the trickle switch. You can then simply walk away until you are ready to fly the

NAME
Lil' Trickler

TYPE
Battery Trickle
Charger Accessory

MFG. BY
RK Products
P.O. Box 4145
Enterprise, Florida
32725

Phone: (386) 574-2750

PRICE
\$29.95 + \$5.50 S&H

next time. Photo #2 shows two positions used where up to three standard R/C chargers can be plugged in at one time.

For years we have been told that to keep NiCds ready to be used, you can keep them on a trickle charge. If you are not familiar with what a trickle charge is, it means that by reducing the normal C/10 charge rate (slow ten-hour charge) to a range of C/50 (and that depends on who you talk to about the MILLIAMP value) reduces the charging current down so that it maintains your battery operated systems so they are ready to be used at any time. Here is a typical example: if we have a 600 mA



Photo#1



Photo#2

battery pack on charge, dividing the capacity by 50 (the C/50) gives the trickle charging rate. This is what the Lil' Trickler is devised to do to maintain NiCd batteries in a charged condition. A very functional device to keep your stable of models ready to fly if you are not around to perform the usual night-beforecharge routine.

With the unit received by RCM, some investigation was made on how it did the electrical functions. The output performance was measured in mA and in some cases given in percentage of charge. The Lil' Trickler was subjected to all the popular brands of wall chargers and this is what was found. First off, with the unit in the trickle mode, the AC voltage to the standard wall chargers was reduced by 22% to 34%. This is done by an electronic device captured in an epoxy glob, as pointed to in Photo #3. The reason for the difference in percentages as noted is due to the loading effect of one to three wall chargers when plugged in place. However, this is not a problem as it maintains the chargers well within a trickle charge mode range. With the Lil' Trickler switch in the "Standard" position for normal

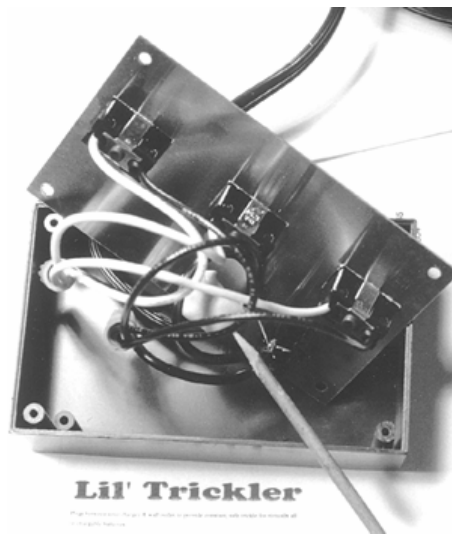


Photo #3

charging, the milliamperage charge rate was measured at an average rate of 61 milliamperage for one of today's typical wall chargers. When the "trickle" switch was engaged the charging rate dropped down by an average of 18 milliamperage from 61 milliamperage. This reading is not absolute because as each single unit is plugged in, it has a loading effect in the trickle mode. (All within the range of maintaining batteries.) Like I said earlier in this article, trickle rate specifications depend on who

you talk to. Anything from a C/25 to a C/100. The Lil' Trickler, which can handle up to three units at a time and no degradations to NiCd or nickel metal hydride batteries should be noted.

Conclusion: when it comes to something handy for R/C without any frills, the Lil' Trickler is as straightforward as you can get. It not only keeps the R/C chargers busy but keeps your models ready. Like the computer lingo saying, plug-n-play; just unplug and play with this one. Oh yes, the cost is well worth the \$29.95 plus \$5.50 S&H per unit from RK Products. Give them a call at: (386) 574-2750 with any questions you might have. Call between 10:00 to 6:00 Eastern time. It is one device to also keep the charging cords busy and not having them getting tangled when not in use. Always an irritating problem.

Reference:

Nickel-Cadmium Battery Application Engineering Handbook for the meaning of the range for trickle charging. For any other questions about the unit tested, you can contact me by e-mail:

gspprod@aol.com

