

Amp Recapping Guide

Replacing filter capacitors the right way — polarity, discharge, and first power-up.

Service checklist · Filter / power supply caps

Replacing filter (and related) capacitors the right way — documentation first, polarities verified, discharge disciplined, and no lifted traces from rushed heat.

DANGER. Filter capacitors store lethal energy after power-down. Discharge every B+ node to 0 V with a proper high-wattage bleeder lead or insulated jumper to chassis ground. Never trust internal bleeders alone. Verify with a trustworthy DMM before touching.

1 · Before you cut a wire

Documentation & photos

Macro photographs of layouts, harnesses, and tie-point strips. Note positive (+) and negative (–) orientations before cutting anything.

Schematic & values

List each cap's capacitance, voltage rating, and role. Match or exceed voltage ratings.

Tools

High-wattage iron or desoldering station; discharge tool; DMM; proper solder and flux.

Polarity map

Electrolytics are polarized. Reverse installation can vent or explode on first power-up.

2 · Procedure

01 Power down & discharge

Unplug. Discharge all B+ filter nodes to chassis ground. Verify 0 V on every node with a DMM.

02 Record the original

Photograph and label each can/radial position. Note lead dress and which lug was positive.

03 Remove old caps

Clear eyelets or tabs carefully — do not lift board traces. Clean residue.

04 Fit new caps

Install correct polarity and voltage rating. Keep lead length and routing similar unless deliberately improving lead dress.

05 Inspect & cold-check

Visual pass under bright light. Cold resistance from B+ to ground should not show a dead short (aside from known bleeder paths).

06 First power-up

Follow the Initial Startup Guide: load attached, current limiter in line, then verify voltages before sustained use.

3 · Good practice

Voltage headroom

Prefer voltage ratings at or above the original, with margin for B+ rise at light load.

Temperature

Keep electrolytics away from hot power resistors and tubes when routing allows.

Bleeder

If the amp had no bleeder, this is a natural moment to add one (Power Cap Bleeder Guide).

One node at a time

Work methodically so a single reversed cap is still catchable on inspection.

Companion to the online guide at dimastro.com. Does not replace tube datasheets or amplifier service literature. Always verify voltages with a trustworthy meter and follow professional high-voltage practice.

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