

Managing the risk of Lithium-Ion Battery usage in strata properties

The ACCC has warned consumers about fire hazards from lithium-ion batteries and is asking consumers to **choose, check, use and dispose** of the batteries safely.

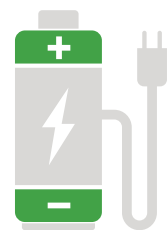
Rechargeable lithium-ion batteries are used to power many common household items, such as mobile phones, laptops, e-bikes, e-scooters and power tools.

Lithium-ion batteries are an integral part of Australia's transition to net zero emissions, however, there has been concern over the safety of these batteries, and ACCC are strongly advising the careful use, maintenance and disposal of these products. This is especially important for owners and residents living in apartment complexes as the fire hazard could potentially pose a risk to all residents.

Lithium-ion batteries contain electrolytes that are highly flammable. There are several situations that can lead to lithium-ion batteries catching fire, including:

- Overcharging or use of non-compliant charging equipment.
- Overheating or exposure to heat or extreme temperatures.
- Dropping, crushing or damaging the battery.
- Short-circuit, battery or system malfunctions.
- Defects during manufacture.

When a battery fails, it can burst the cells, which would result in release of toxic, flammable and explosive gases, and an intense, self-sustaining fire that can be difficult to extinguish.



CHU has put together the following safety tips about lithium-ion battery usage in strata properties.

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CHOOSE CAREFULLY

Ensure the purchase a product meets local safety standards and is purchased from an authorised dealer.

- Avoid cheap or counterfeit chargers as they may not have all the safety features of the quality products.



CHECK REGULARLY

Check your devices and batteries for any signs of damage.

- Keep track of regular inspections with a register to keep on top of their age, quality and performance. This could include a replacement schedule as required by the manufacturer.
- If the battery or charger is within a common area, add it to your regular maintenance schedule.
- Be aware of the location of fire extinguishers in and around the apartment complex and ensure these are checked and inspected regularly.
- Lithium batteries that support renewable energy systems such as solar panels utilise a Battery Management System to monitor cell voltage, currents, temperatures and assist in avoiding a potential thermal runaway incident. The Battery Management System (BMS) should be installed and maintained to manufacturer specifications in an optimal location away from direct sunlight, with good ventilation and free from potential hazards.
- If you notice any abnormalities with the battery stop using it immediately.



USE AND STORE CORRECTLY

Charge your devices in well-ventilated area, away from sunlight and ensure it is not covered or enclosed while charging.

- Always charge your batteries and devices on hard surfaces as opposed to soft material surfaces such as carpets.
- Do not leave devices charging for longer than they need to, overnight or if you leave your place of residence.
- Most manufacturers recommend unplugging them once they reach a full charge. Continuous charging at 100% can contribute to a shorter battery lifespan over time.
- Lithium-ion batteries should not be exposed to temperature extremes whether they are in use or stored. If you need to store lithium-ion batteries for an extended period, ensure they are partially charged (around 40-60%).



DISPOSE SAFELY

Responsible disposal of failed or redundant batteries is essential for the entire community.

- Do not dispose in the regular apartment building bins as this could result in a fire, but also result in biodiversity risk if not recycled responsibly.
- Many local recycling centres or electronic retailers offer battery recycling programs to ensure environmentally friendly disposal.
- Keep yourself updated on any product recalls or safety notices related to your devices and batteries.



If a fire is triggered ensure you follow emergency procedures and call 000 for emergency assistance. Being proactive about battery safety not only protects you and your property but also contributes to the responsible and sustainable use of technology. For more information about lithium battery safety you can download the [ACCC report](#).

To learn more about proactive risk mitigation strategies for your strata property, talk to your strata manager, broker or visit chu.com.au

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