



Lithium-ion batteries

Important information on the use and charging of lithium-ion battery products.

It is one of the fastest growing fire risks in the country and recently there has been an increase in media coverage on lithium battery fire events. We have seen several claims submitted recently for fires where the cause has been identified as initiating in a lithium-ion battery device.

Lithium-ion batteries are commonly found in larger devices such as e-scooters and e-bikes as well as smaller devices including phones and laptops, power tools, garden equipment, and kitchen appliances.

These batteries carry a great deal of energy in a small space, and when they fail, they can release a large amount of energy which can create toxic fumes, explosions, and flames.

You can help minimise the risks by preventing or mitigating the hazards by developing good charging habits to ensure you are charging safely, being aware of the warning signs of faulty equipment and damaged batteries, and ensuring lithium-ion batteries are disposed of safely.

Three habits to adopt when using lithium-ion batteries:

Safe products

- Purchase products from reputable suppliers. Second hand devices should be checked thoroughly.
- Only use chargers and cords supplied with the device and one that meets Australian Standards.
- Do not modify or tamper with batteries and the devices they power.

Safe charging

- Charge your batteries and devices on hard surfaces. Never charge them on beds, blankets, or carpets.
- Never leave the devices on charge when you go to sleep or leave the residence.
- Do not charge a battery that shows signs of damage.
- Do not charge the batteries or devices while they are hot.
- Avoid places where the batteries or devices may get hot or wet such as in the sun or a hot car.
- Importantly, do not charge a device in an escape area such as a doorway, hallway, or corridor. You could be trapped if there is a fire.

Safety

- Stop using the product if you notice overheating, bulging, leaking, or unusual sounds.
- If you see smoke, flames, or a vapour cloud, call 000 immediately.
- Never throw lithium-ion batteries in your regular waste or recycling collection bins. Many battery-related fires start in household bins, rubbish chutes, and waste disposal areas.

