

HAZARDOUS INCIDENT RESPONSE TEAM








HOT TOPIC:

Lithium-ion Battery Safety - Wildfires

Lithium-ion batteries are used in many electronic devices due to the high amount of power they can provide and their long battery life. They are commonly found in smartphones and tablets, fitness trackers, portable chargers, laptops, power tools, drones, e-bikes, personal mobility devices, and electric vehicles, among other devices.

While they bring many benefits, they also require proper handling, storage and disposal for safe use. In the event of a wildfire, lithium-ion batteries pose additional risks and should be considered extremely dangerous. They may spontaneously ignite, explode and/or emit toxic gasses can after the wildfire has been extinguished.

AFTER A WILDFIRE, FOLLOW THESE TIPS REGARDING LITHIUM-ION BATTERIES:

-  **DO NOT** touch any fire-damaged products that contain lithium-ion batteries, as they may ignite without warning.
-  **DO NOT** start, move, tow or charge a fire-damaged electric/hybrid vehicle (EV, PHEV, HEV) until it is safe to do so.
-  **DO NOT** use or start a fire-damaged residential energy storage or house battery until it is safe to do so.
-  **DO NOT** enter enclosed spaces that contain lithium-ion battery products such as electronics stores, charging stations, garages, tool sheds – even closets. Gasses and vapors from damaged lithium-ion batteries can build up in enclosed spaces to produce a dangerous and explosive environment.
-  **DO** call us if you encounter a lithium-ion battery while re-entering your property and/or are unsure if a lithium-ion battery was damaged.

If you hear a popping noise, or see smoke or fire:

- Do not attempt to extinguish or smother the battery.
- Leave the area immediately; move upwind (at least 330 feet – that's about the size of a football field) and call 911.

REMOVAL OF BATTERIES IN WILDFIRE ZONES:

After a wildfire event or similar disaster, experts may be called to safely test and remove lithium-ion batteries. The treatment of the site varies by location, incident, device and other factors and can take days or more than a year – depending on those circumstances. Experts must tread lightly to avoid triggering additional fires while being alert to unavoidable fires that may occur as a result of battery removal. Removal is a slow and deliberate process that requires patience and trained experience.



HELP IS HERE FOR YOU:

If you have been affected by a wildfire and have been in possession of devices containing lithium-ion batteries that should be checked, please contact the following agencies who can help:



- California Department of Public Health, 916-558-1784
- Environmental Protection Agency, 866-372-9378
- County of San Diego Recycling and Household Hazardous Waste Hotline, 1-877-R-1-EARTH
- I Love a Clean San Diego, 1-800-237-2583

For More Information on Waste Disposal in San Diego County Contact:

County of San Diego Recycling and Household Hazardous Waste (Unincorporated Areas)

 1-877-713-2784  sdhhw.org

I Love a Clean San Diego (Incorporated Areas)

 1-800-237-2583  cleansd.org

