

2023 FIREFIGHTER SAFETY STAND DOWN



June 22, 2023

Post-Incident Considerations



In order to limit the impact of fire and secondary responses to the original event, we must work collaboratively with our community to limit secondary events. Lithium batteries are regulated as a hazardous material under the U.S. Department of Transportation's (DOT) Hazardous Materials Regulations (HMR; 49 C.F.R., Parts 171-180). The HMR applies to any material DOT determines can pose an unreasonable risk to health, safety, and property when transported in commerce. The risks posed by lithium cells and batteries are generally a function of type, size, and chemistry. Lithium cells and batteries can present both chemical (e.g., corrosive or flammable electrolytes) and electrical hazards.

Post-Home and Commercial Building Fires with Mobility Devices

Responding to home fires that involve lithium-ion batteries or other battery chemistry is a key aspect of our service. Responding crews and fire investigators must remain vigilant to identify and remove battery packs, equipment, and cells that were involved in a fire incident. Batteries or mobility devices should be moved to the following location in order of preference until it can be appropriately mitigated: Bathroom tub with all cells fully submerged in water, sink large enough that all cells can be fully submerged in water. Garbage pail or bucket large enough that all cells are capable of being fully submerged in water.

Post-Incident Recycling

Responding to incidents involving batteries that are in transport or storage for recycling is on the rise and can be extremely dangerous to responding crews. Proper separation, transport, and re-packaging are key.

[Brief the Towing Company](#) and their personnel on the hazards. An engine may need to escort the vehicle to the recovery location. Follow [NFPA 921](#) protocol for vehicle safety during post-response investigation, arson investigation, and vehicle investigation. Thermal events with the battery system could continue for some time after the initial incident.



[Recycle Household Batteries](#)

[Recycling Laws by State](#)

Post-Incident EV Crashes and Fires

- Batteries should always be treated as energized and pose an ongoing risk to the investigator
- Ensure that passenger and cargo compartment remain ventilated, i.e., open window, door, or trunk during investigation and storage.
- Never store a suspected battery indoors at the station, building, or home. Do not store a severely damaged vehicle with a lithium-ion battery inside a structure or within 50 feet of any structure or vehicle.
- For safe storage while awaiting proper disposal, place the battery in a container of sand or another chemically-inert cushioning material (over-pack drum).