



PRESS RELEASE

GOOD PRACTICES IN TACKLING FIRES CAUSED BY LITHIUM BATTERIES IN E-WASTE

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WEEE Forum, EuRIC, EUCOBAT, EERA, MWE and the WEEELABEX Organisation join forces to counter the occurrence of fires caused by lithium batteries and e-waste containing lithium batteries. A new report compiles good practices addressed to all actors in the value chain and covering all phases of products' lifecycle.

More and more electrical and electronic products in everyday life contain batteries, making life more convenient and pleasant. However, those same batteries, when damaged, also increasingly cause fires.

In the past few months, organisations representing the industry that manages the collection and treatment of spent batteries and electronic waste (WEEE) along with manufacturers of home appliances and consumer electronics, gathered to exchange views about this issue of growing concern in order to design measures to counter the frequent occurrence of fires. A survey among recyclers resulted in a better understanding of the issue of fires in the WEEE management chain. The report, "Recommendations for tackling fires caused by lithium batteries in WEEE", has been prepared by the WEEE Forum and EuRIC with the active contribution of experts from various organisations including the co-signatories EERA, EUCOBAT, Municipal Waste Europe and the WEEELABEX Organisation. The report presents a set of recommendations and good practices aimed at countering the occurrence of fire incidents caused by lithium batteries and WEEE containing lithium batteries.

"The report concludes that there is not a magic formula that will eradicate the risk of fires caused by WEEE containing batteries", says the WEEE Forum. "It is imperative that actions are taken urgently in all steps of the lifecycles of EEE and lithium batteries and by all actors in the value chain: from design to disposal of WEEE and batteries including the consideration of transport and treatment. For this, further work to assess the extent of the issue and potential solutions is required".

A thermal event may become a severe incident if it is not rapidly detected and extinguished. Training, prevention, and detection measures are therefore essential for identifying and tackling risky situations. The report comprises recommendations and good practices addressed to the main participants in the steps of the EEE and WEEE value chain and includes recommendations to producer responsibility organisations of EEE and batteries, to local authorities, and policymakers.

"The European Green Deal and the new Circular Economy Action Plan identify 'electronics' among key product value chains where recycling plays a major role in achieving sustainability goals. Battery fires are a genuine challenge for the recycling industry and the entire value chain. Properly addressing the risk of fires caused by WEEE containing lithium batteries through a multi-stakeholder approach is essential to support electronics' recyclers which play an essential role in the achievement of the EU's overarching sustainability goals", says EuRIC.

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