



Weekly Safety Tip

Disposing of Rechargeable Batteries

5 key safety measures when disposing of 'rechargeable' batteries



Rechargeable batteries power everything from smartphones, power tools and equipment to electric vehicles. When these batteries are depleted, they need to be disposed of properly to reduce their environmental impact and potential harm.

It is estimated that [less than 5% of used lithium-ion batteries](#) are being recycled, so consider using this guide (courtesy of Grainger) to help determine the best ways to safely dispose of batteries.

Types of Rechargeable Batteries

You need to identify the type of rechargeable battery before disposal since each type requires specific handling procedures due to their chemical compositions. There are several types of rechargeable batteries found in tools and equipment, from cordless drills and drivers to saws, blowers, work lights, trimmers and more, including:

- **Lithium-ion:** Found in cordless power tools, outdoor equipment, digital cameras, small and large appliances.
- **Nickel-cadmium (NiCad or NiCd):** Used in cordless power tools, two-way radios and medical equipment.
- **Nickel metal hydride (NiMH):** Found in older power tools, two-way radios and digital cameras.
- **Small-sealed lead acid (SS-Pb):** Used in emergency lighting, backup power supplies, hospital equipment.

Reducing Risks during Disposal

Most batteries contain potentially toxic chemicals like cadmium, lead, lithium or sulfuric acid. When old batteries are thrown into landfills, these pollutants can leak and contaminate groundwater, harm ecosystems and potentially enter the food chain. According to the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), battery recycling prevents pollution and helps recover valuable materials like nickel, lithium and cobalt. These materials can be used in green energy technologies, reducing the need to mine for new resources.

Additionally, although they may not have enough energy to power a device, **old batteries can be a fire risk if handled or stored improperly.** For example, between 2013 and 2020, [245 fires at waste facilities across 28 states](#) in the United States were likely caused by lithium metal batteries or rechargeable lithium-ion batteries, according to an EPA report.

Take the following precautions to help safely dispose of rechargeable batteries:

1. Check Local Regulations

Check local, state and federal regulations before disposing. Regulations vary by location and can stipulate specific disposal methods and guidelines. Some states mandate specific disposal methods, while many require recycling of rechargeable batteries.

Refer to the [battery disposal laws map](#) created by Call2Recycle.

Weekly Safety Share



8 Steps for Psychological Safety



WORKER WELL-BEING SHARE

Research by the [Center for Creative Leadership](#) found teams with high degrees of psychological safety reported higher levels of performance & lower levels of interpersonal conflict.

They also found that senior leadership teams reported the greatest differences in their perceived levels of psychological safety: it means that senior teams are the place where creative problem solving is most likely to be squashed & teams fail to collaborate & innovate together to their full potential.

They suggest 8 steps for leaders to help create a more psychologically safe workplace:

1. **Make psychological safety an explicit priority**
2. **Facilitate everyone speaking up**
3. **Establish norms for how failure is handled**
4. **Create space for new ideas (even wild ones)**
5. **Embrace productive conflict**
6. **Pay close attention and look for patterns**
7. **Make an intentional effort to promote dialogue**
8. **Celebrate wins**



"Psychological safety
at work doesn't mean that
everybody is nice to each other all the
time. It means that people feel free to
"brainstorm out loud," voice half-finished
thoughts, openly challenge the status quo,
share feedback, and work through
disagreements together."

David A. Varwig, CSP-retired and SCNWO Board Member



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