



Fast. Fierce. Fatal. Our campaign about lithium-ion battery safety.



Phones, laptops, vapes, cordless vacuums... e-bikes, mobility scooters, cars... electric toothbrushes and kids' gadgets.

More and more of the things we use and recharge rely on lithium-ion batteries. Thankfully, the majority are very safe.

But if lithium-ion batteries go wrong, the fires they start can be:

FAST

Fires can start suddenly and spread incredibly quickly.

FIERCE

They burn at extreme temperatures, sending out toxic fumes and explosive vapours.

FATAL

People have died in these fires – often with little time to get out.

Our campaign is designed to help you know the risks – and take some simple steps to keep safe.

Why we're talking about this now

With Black Friday deals rolling out, and electrical products being sold at bargain prices, now is the ideal moment to launch this campaign. Christmas is also just weeks away, and many of the devices we've mentioned will soon be bought and gifted.

A tragic case study

Just over a year ago, a young couple in Coventry tragically lost their lives in a house fire. It was caused by the lithium-ion battery on a poorly modified e-bike. The fire started suddenly and burned so fiercely that there they couldn't escape. Natasha and Karlo's two dogs also died.



The numbers

Lithium-ion battery fires are becoming one of the biggest fire risks in our homes.

Our firefighters attended 40 lithium-ion battery incidents in 2023 and 69 in 2024. By 31 October this year, we'd already responded to 65.

E-bike and e-scooter incidents are climbing, too: 6 in 2023, 13 in 2024, 16 by October 2025.

And batteries thrown in the bin, or mixed with general waste, are sparking fires and costing the waste industry an estimated £1 billion a year.

Does this affect me?

In short, this advice is for everyone who uses rechargeable devices:

- e-bike and e-scooter users (including delivery riders)
- students and renters, especially in shared homes
- families buying electricals online
- landlords, property managers and housing providers
- anyone using rechargeable devices at home or work.

The advice

We've split this section into five sections: buying, charging, storing, spotting and disposing.

Buying

A few simple choices make a huge difference:

- buy devices and chargers from trusted retailers
- look for UK safety marks
- only use the correct charger (same power/output). This is really important
- avoid cheap, unbranded e-bike conversion kits
- be wary of third-party sellers on online marketplaces. Does it look like a bargain that's too good to be true?
- Is it tricky to work out where it's from, or how many owners it's had? Don't buy it.

Charging

Most battery fires happen during charging. Here's how to charge safely:

- use the charger that came with your device (or one that's definitely compatible)
- charge on a hard, flat surface
- unplug once fully charged
- never charge overnight or while out of the house. This is really important
- don't charge devices in escape routes, like hallways, landings, doorways or under stairs.

Storing

How and where you keep your devices and their batteries matters:

- store them in a cool, dry area
- keep them away from anything that might catch fire
- avoid storing devices on soft furnishings or inside cramped spaces

Spotting

If a battery is acting strangely, it's trying to tell you something. Watch out for:

- heat, or the battery getting unusually hot
- swelling or bulging
- leaking
- a burning or acrid smell
- hissing or popping sounds
- not holding its charge properly
- dents or damage.

If you notice any of these, stop using it immediately.

Disposal

Don't put batteries in with your other rubbish. They could start a bin fire, set a bin lorry alight, or spark a blaze at a waste site.

Damaged or swollen batteries should never be stored indoors.

Instead:

- take them to a battery recycling point (you'll find these in many supermarkets and recycling centres)
- contact your local council for more info, or specific advice about how to recycle a battery.

Please remember...

If you suspect that a lithium-ion battery is an imminent fire risk, get out of your home and call 999. Do not move or handle the device or battery.

For everyday safety, fit and test smoke alarms regularly.

[Read more about our campaign on our website.](#)

Thank you and have a safe week.

West Midlands Fire Service