

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE-

26 Sep. 23:

LITHIUM BATTERY WARNING

Cootamundra-Gundagai Regional Council (CGRC) is issuing a warning to residents about the dangers of Lithium batteries.

If a lithium-ion battery is improperly manufactured, handled, stored, or disposed of, they can set fire or explode. They have caused fires and explosions in Australia and across the globe that have led to property damage, serious injuries and death.

A lithium-ion battery fire is very difficult to put out with water and other types of chemicals may be required to extinguish it.

All batteries are hazardous and potentially dangerous if they are not correctly stored, maintained and/or used according to the manufacturer's guidelines. Failing to correctly store, maintain and/or use a battery correctly can have significant impact on its performance and life.

The risks associated with lithium-ion batteries can include overheating causing fire or an explosion, resulting in burns, toxic chemical exposure, and pollution due to the battery rupturing. The main risk for lithium-ion batteries is components in the battery breaking down at elevated temperatures causing the battery to overheat and catch fire.

Lithium-ion batteries are classified as dangerous goods under the Australian Dangerous Goods Code and there have been several reported incidents of lithium-ion battery fires across the country that have caused extensive damage to vehicles and homes.

To manage the risks associated with Lithium-ion batteries, you should ensure batteries are stored within the temperature range recommended by the manufacturer and away from flammable materials. Don't expose the battery packs to heat or direct sunlight or leave them in hot vehicles for extended periods. Charge batteries using only a charger recommended by the manufacturer. Don't charge batteries on flammable surfaces (such as wood, carpet, material, paper, plastics). Don't leave batteries unattended when charging. Store and/or transport batteries in a non-flammable container. Regularly check the condition of the battery. Do not use batteries that are damaged or swollen. Discontinue the charging process and immediately disconnect the battery if you witness a battery changing shape, starting to balloon, swell up, smoke, or become extremely hot, and refer to the battery manufactures safe work practices and Material Safety Data Sheet (MSDS) before use.

Failing lithium batteries have also been reported to make hissing or cracking sounds. If you notice a strong or unusual odour coming from the battery, this is also a bad sign.

Overcharging a battery can cause short-circuiting and damage to the battery. Physical damage to the battery makes the heat more unstable and increases the fire risk. The chemical fires produce toxic gases and are hard to extinguish.

CGRC requests all residents to dispose of all batteries, lithium and others in the correct manner. Please don't throw them in the garbage or recycling bin. Council battery recycling stations installed at both Council administration offices, and batteries can be taken to Council Waste Centres for correct disposal.

Lithium-ion batteries are recyclable, but they [don't go in the recycling bin](#). The purpose of recycling lithium-ion batteries is to avoid toxic electronic waste from clogging the landfills and to use the retrieved materials in the fabrication of new products.

How to properly recycle lithium-ion batteries:

- Remove the battery from the device if possible.
- Store batteries in a cool, dry place such as a plastic container until you can get them to a recycling centre.
- If the batteries are physically damaged, store them in an insulated plastic bag to avoid any short-circuiting.
- Recycle your batteries in at Councils Recycling Stations located a CGRC Administration offices in Cootamundra and Gundagai or at a recycling centre.

What to avoid when recycling lithium-ion batteries:

- Do not throw out batteries in your regular household garbage or recycling bin.
- Do not burn batteries in a fire, they may explode.
- Don't mix damaged, and non-damaged batteries.
- Avoid storing batteries in metal containers.
- Don't store batteries for a long period of time.

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