SAFETY Alert

Queensland

Hazards associated with Lithium Batteries

ALERT NO: 11/26 DATE: November 2026

ISSUE – Hazards associated with Lithium Batteries

As SLSQ continues to introduce technologies such as drones and e-bikes, the safe storage and handling of lithium batteries is essential to protect staff, members and the broader public. These batteries pose risks of fire and toxic fumes. SLSQ's Uncrewed Aviation Team recently consulted Queensland Fire Department engineers and the RPAS team to review the latest research and guidance.

Lithium batteries pose two key risks:

Fire: a battery fire can reignite after being extinguished due to thermal runaway and the extreme heat generated.

Toxic fumes: fumes emitted by the battery pose a serious risk and should not be underestimated.

Charging and batteries	Charge batteries under supervision in a cool, ventilated area away from sunlight, heat sources and flammable materials. The charging location should not obstruct escape routes in the event of a fire. Follow manufacturers' guidelines and use only original equipment manufacturer (OEM) batteries and chargers. Battery storage locations should be clearly marked as containing dangerous materials. SLSQ has produced a standard safety poster for all stakeholders to use, the poster is attached on the next page. For extended periods of non-use, such as the off-season, batteries should not be stored at full charge. Where possible, store them in a LiPo bag as a safety precaution. These will be given out to clubs as required shortly.
Damaged batteries	Batteries with minor damage or those involved in a crash should be removed from service and placed in a LiPo bag. Clearly mark the battery as unserviceable and report it to your Patrol/Club Captain. Dispose of unserviceable batteries as soon as reasonably possible. Do not place them in general waste. Many local council resource recovery and waste centres accept batteries. Use https://recyclemate.com.au/ to find other locations that accept lithium batteries.
Fire risk	Treat any battery that is excessively hot, swollen or emitting an odour as a potential fire risk. The most recent research indicates that you may have as little as 15 seconds to react once a failing battery ignites. The quality of Lithium Polymer bags to house batteries can vary greatly. When selecting a product consider whether the product is compliant with existing safety standards. As a guide, a heat protection tolerance of 1000 degrees Celsius should be considered adequate.
Fire Procedures	Under no circumstances should you attempt to move a burning battery or extinguish the flames. If the fire is on a beach or in an open area, a 100m exclusion zone must be established until emergency services arrive. Consider any wind-driven drift. If the fire is in a building, immediately initiate the building's evacuation procedures, including activating the nearest fire alarms. **Call 000 immediately**. Tell the operator that the fire involves a lithium battery. Provide the battery size and watt-hour (Wh) rating, and the number of batteries involved. This information is valuable to responding emergency services.

Contact: Lifesaving Operations (07) 3846 8000 / lifesavingoperations@lifesaving.com.au


DANGER
LITHIUM ION
BATTERY
STORAGE AREA