

Used-battery fire

We have had a report of a fire in a used-battery recycling container in the stores of a government laboratory. The fire was put out using fire fighting appliances before the fire service arrived on site, but things would have been worse if the incident had happened outside of working hours.

The cause seemed to be disc-shaped lithium batteries short circuiting and generating heat.

Our advice is to prevent short circuits by wrapping insulating tape over terminals, or by doing a one-for-one swap by putting the old battery into the packaging the new battery comes out of and marking the package "USED – FOR DISPOSAL".

Of most importance - do not take new batteries out of their packaging and store them one on top of the other in a nice neat pile.

