



SAFE STORAGE OF PORTABLE BATTERIES

The introduction of the Batteries Directive (2006/66/EC) into UK law will undoubtedly significantly increase the number of waste batteries being collected. There will be an increase in the number of collection points in commercial and industrial premises, retailers and in the home.

Waste Batteries are generally classified as both Hazardous Waste and Dangerous Goods, and whilst many of them are benign, there are others that are quite volatile and need to be treated with due respect.

With the correct use of suitable containers, and a straightforward common-sense approach the risks of storing waste batteries can be minimised. The purpose of this document is to point out a few simple things that can help keep you safe and minimise your risks.

YOU ARE DISPOSING OF YOUR BATTERIES – DOES THIS MEAN THEY ARE REALLY DEAD?

NO! Even when a battery will no longer power the equipment it was in, there is still some residual charge. It has been estimated that as many as 70% of single-use batteries that are thrown away still have a useful charge left in them.

Therefore, when either disposing of or handling batteries that have been thrown away, you must handle them and treat them as if they are fully charged. Most batteries will not short out when put together in a container, but some types – e.g. button cells can short out very easily, and should be dealt with accordingly, as explained below.

ARE BATTERIES REALLY HAZARDOUS?

If handled sensibly, batteries are not dangerous, but if mishandled they can become hazardous. The vast majority of batteries have some sort of caustic electrolyte inside them, and some types can explode if broken open or heated. Therefore you should always treat batteries with respect, and make sure they are placed somewhere where they will not get damaged or become overheated – even when you have decided they need to be disposed of, and you consider them to be dead.

Taking a responsible approach to dealing with your waste batteries applies equally whether you are gathering them together to be recycled, or if you are throwing them into the general waste for disposal in landfill.

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SO HOW SHOULD I STORE MY WASTE BATTERIES?

IN THE HOME

- Keep them in a plastic bag or other small container away from other wastes
- Do not let them sit in water, as this may allow them to corrode which may lead to them leaking.
- If you have any button cells or Lithium Batteries it is sensible to place some sticky tape over the terminals to ensure they cannot short circuit.
- For advice on where to put your batteries to get them recycled, contact your local authority.

IN THE OFFICE

- Use a suitable container to store waste batteries. Do not mix them with other wastes.
- Do not let them sit in water, as this may allow them to corrode which may lead to them leaking.
- If you have any button cells or Lithium Batteries it is sensible to place some sticky tape over the terminals to ensure they cannot short circuit.
- Use a professional waste company to remove your waste batteries. Contact a Battery Compliance Scheme, or G&P Batteries for further advice on how to get your batteries recycled.

IN OTHER INDUSTRIAL PREMISES

- Use a specialist container to store waste batteries. Do not mix them with other wastes.
- Make sure you know what types of batteries you are using, and take advice on their correct storage and usage, when new or when waste.
- Do not let them sit in water, as this may allow them to corrode which may lead to them leaking.
- If you have any button cells or Lithium Batteries it is sensible to place some sticky tape over the terminals to ensure they cannot short circuit.
- Use a professional waste company to remove your waste batteries. Contact a Battery Compliance Scheme, or G&P Batteries for further advice on how to get your batteries recycled.