



# Nassau lithium-ion batteries

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"There is a liquid inside the battery and when there is an internal failure of the battery, the liquid gets heated, it turns into a gas, and the gas expands," said Capt. Michael Mennella, Nassau County's fire marshal.

"Everything you use, from blenders to tools to cars, they all use these batteries," Nassau County Chief Fire Marshal Michael Uttaro said. "A lot of times, homes have electrical systems that can't maintain charging 10 or 15 of these devices in an overnight period."

Officials warn to never charge e-bikes indoors or next to the house, and to only use a charging cord approved for the device. They also say to never charge a phone or laptop on anything combustible, such as a couch or bed.

"Sometime you pick it up and it's almost hot. So those are the things we're talking about. Now, if you had that under a blanket, a blanket got knocked on top of it, or it's on top of a bunch of papers, think of what would happen," Uttaro said.

About 65 firefighters from Hicksville and four nearby departments responded to the 5:50 p.m. fire where they found the residents safely in the street, Nassau Assistant Chief Fire Marshal James F. Hickman said.

"All items that are powered by lithium-ion batteries need to be cared for properly," Hickman said, adding that if a tool is damaged the owner should assume the battery is damaged, as well.

While statistics for Long Island were not immediately available, recent studies have found the FDNY and fire departments in San Francisco have responded to more than 660 fires involving lithium-ion batteries since 2019.

These batteries allow electric devices and electric cars to last longer, but when they catch fire, authorities have said, they exhibit an explosive quality, burning off all their energy until it's gone. That sudden release of vast amounts of energy is what firefighters say threatens lives and property in rapid, terrible ways.



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