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## **Consumer Alert: State Fire Marshal's Office reminds consumers to be lithium-ion battery safe**

**BOISE, ID (May 21, 2024)** – The Idaho State Fire Marshal's Office is reminding consumers to be mindful of lithium-ion batteries, following recent fires caused by a lithium battery failure and improper disposal.

Lithium-ion batteries supply power to many kinds of devices including smart phones, laptops, e-scooters and e-bikes, e-cigarettes, smoke alarms, toys, and even cars. These batteries store a large amount of energy in a small amount of space. If not used correctly, or if damaged, these batteries can catch on fire or explode.

The State Fire Marshal offers these lithium battery safety tips:

- Purchase and use devices that are listed by a qualified testing laboratory.
- Always follow the manufacturer's instructions.
- Only use the battery that is designed for the device.
- Put batteries in the device the correct way.
- Only use the charging cord that came with the device.
- Do not charge a device under your pillow, on your bed, or on a couch.
- Do not keep charging the device or device battery after it is fully charged.
- Keep batteries at room temperature when possible. Do not charge them at temperatures below 32°F (0°C) or above 105°F (40°C).
- Store batteries away from anything that can catch fire.

Watch for these signs of a problem with lithium batteries:

- **Rapid Discharge** – A rapid discharge rate is one of the initial signs that your lithium-ion battery is damaged. Users may notice a device losing power even after a full charge. This suggests that the battery is struggling to maintain enough charge over time and indicates an underlying problem with the battery's ability to keep and deliver power.
- **Overheating** – Another prominent red flag is excessive heat generation during battery use or charging. Some heat is normal. An abnormal temperature rise could cause internal issues within the battery, affect performance, and pose safety risks. Pay attention to any

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noticeable increase in heat during regular operation. It is a clear sign that the battery needs closer inspection.

- **Swelling or Bulging** – Inspect batteries for any signs of swelling or bulging. Swelling or bulging in the battery’s casing is due to the accumulation of gas inside the battery and is a clear sign of internal problems. A deformed battery points towards potential failure and poses safety risks including the possibility of leakage or even explosion.
- **Reduced Capacity** – Frequent charging due to reduced capacity is common as lithium-ion batteries age. Over time, these batteries degrade, leading to a diminished ability to hold a charge. If the device needs more charging than usual, it may indicate a declining battery.

The State Fire Marshal’s Office adds that defunct lithium-ion batteries should be disposed of properly and never in household trash. Consumers should take them to a battery recycling location or contact their local waste disposal or landfill for proper disposal instructions.

“Lithium batteries require special attention,” says State Fire Marshal Knute Sandahl. “Although they may seem to be safe, they can still pose a risk of fire, especially if they are damaged. Idahoans who follow these safety tips can protect themselves from the devastating effects of a lithium battery caused fire.”

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#### **About the Idaho State Fire Marshal’s Office**

The State Fire Marshal’s Office participates in and coordinates an integrated statewide system designed to protect human life from fire and explosions through fire prevention, investigation and public education activities. The program involves fire prevention activities, fire/arson investigation, code enforcement and the operation of the National Fire Incident Reporting System. The State Fire Marshal’s Office provides assistance to local fire agencies throughout the state.