



With the holidays rapidly approaching, an influx of new electronic devices will soon occur in homes across America. While these new gadgets are sure to be fun and exciting gifts for children and adults alike, it is important to also remember that many of them contain a potentially hazardous lithium ion or lithium metal battery. Lithium batteries have become popular in the world of electronics because they are able to harness a massive amount of energy into a relatively small casing, but this also makes them extremely dangerous in the event of malfunction or mishandling. Improperly stored or charged lithium ion batteries can be prone to overheating or even exploding in some cases, creating a fire risk that is often times avoidable. Button-type lithium metal batteries also pose a significant risk if swallowed, so it is crucial to keep them out of the hands of small children. There are some simple safety tips that consumers can adhere to that will reduce the risks associated with these devices and ensure that the holiday season remains both safe and enjoyable.

It is important when selecting gifts for both children and adults that one carefully chooses the safest and most reliable products. Many of the batteries that are most susceptible to malfunction are coming from companies that have tried to cut costs in the manufacturing process by ignoring important safety standards. Make sure when purchasing electronic devices that the company that manufactured them is reputable; never sacrifice safety for a good deal.

Once the device has been gifted, it is easy for the recipient to get carried away with the excitement of a new toy and forget about how potentially dangerous the battery inside can be. Make sure to take the time to review the procedures for safe use and charging of the device. Only charge electronic devices with the charging cable provided by the manufacturer. This cable has been designed specifically for the battery contained in the device, and using any other charger puts the battery at risk of malfunctioning. Never place a device on a flammable surface such as a bed or a couch while charging. Should the device begin to overheat, being near any sort of flammable surface will greatly increase the risk of fire. When not in use, store devices containing batteries in an area free from direct sunlight; this outside source of heat could trigger an unsafe reaction within the battery.

Anyone purchasing a lithium metal button-type battery powered device for a child should also pay attention to the location of the battery in the device itself. Battery compartments should be secure and out of view of the child to prevent the battery from being removed. Within curious young hands, a battery becomes exponentially more dangerous, and one of these potential dangers is accidental swallowing. Once ingested, a lithium battery becomes activated by saliva, potentially causing it to burn through anything with which it comes into contact. Symptoms of a swallowed battery include coughing, chest pain, fever, and nausea. If a child is suspected to have swallowed a battery, they should be taken to the emergency room immediately; nothing should be given by mouth and vomiting should not be induced.

The world of personal electronic devices has been completely revolutionized by lithium batteries. It is exciting to be a part of this technology-driven world, and the holidays are an excellent time to give the gift of electronics. However, above all else, safety should be the priority of all consumers. After all, the holidays are all about family, so make sure to keep loved ones safe this holiday season by following these simple tips for battery safety. Enjoy your holidays and your wonderful new gifts, and remember to always stay safe!

*-Written By Roger Erickson, BDG*