

Battery campaign warns against the 'hidden dangers' of disposal

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An estimated 65% of fires reported at 26 waste facilities throughout California last year were caused by batteries, according to a recent study commissioned by the California Product Stewardship Council. To minimise the number of incidents in the future, local authorities and industry stakeholders have partnered up with Call2Recycle for a joint safety initiative called 'Avoid the Spark'.

'More than ever, consumers are enjoying the many benefits that come with the freedom to go unplugged. This means that battery usage is at an all-time high,' reports Call2Recycle, North America's first and largest consumer battery recycling programme.

Usage of rechargeable batteries is on the rise: around 95% of Americans own a mobile phone, and almost 50% have handheld gadgets such as e-readers.

Call2Recycle's latest market survey found that 60% of consumers throw away some or all of their single-use batteries and 15% do the same with rechargeable batteries.

Understanding li-ion batteries

Despite California implementing a number of recycling laws, many citizens remain unaware of the hidden dangers accompanying end-of-life batteries, especially the lithium-ion type. The new safety scheme is intended to bridge the gap between consumer understanding and taking responsibility when it comes to discarding batteries.

'Twenty years ago, lithium-based batteries were almost non-existent,' said Carl Smith, ceo and president of Call2Recycle. Market data suggests that, in 2016, 367 million lithium batteries were sold in the US, of which 44.3 million were purchased in California. 'California is an excellent state to launch our Avoid the Spark education effort,' Smith adds.