**Your Actions Have Consequences: Proper Disposal of Lithium Batteries**

**Word Count:** 199

Lithium batteries are increasingly common in most cordless electronic devices, but improper disposal practices can result in fires and they should not be placed in typical waste or recycling containers. As a matter of fact, these batteries have been the cause of over 25,000 fires between 2013 – 2018 alone, mainly due to poor disposal practices due to lack of consumer awareness.

When these batteries are mixed into the normal waste or recycling streams, they can overheat, get punctured or crush and catch fire. Once started, these fires can be difficult to control due to the mixing of these batteries with other flammable materials.

As improper disposal of lithium batteries has increased, so has the frequency of fires on waste trucks and at recycling centers across the country. In 2017 alone, 65% of fires at waste and recycling facilities were due to lithium-ion batteries.

There are resources that can help consumers dispose of these potentially dangerous devices. Guidance on how and where to recycle products can be found at [www.call2recycle.org](http://www.call2recycle.org), while [www.searchearth911.com](http://www.searchearth911.com) offers shipping options and community locations. Typically, local municipalities or hardware stores can provide recycling options. Consumer awareness is an increasingly important element in combating this hidden hazard.