

# RECYCLING BATTERIES GUIDELINE

## SAFE & RESPONSIBLE USE & DISPOSAL OF BUTTON BATTERIES



**MORE INFORMATION**  
[www.batteryrecycling.org.au](http://www.batteryrecycling.org.au)

**POISONS HOTLINE 13 11 26**  
**Emergency 000**

**Guidelines brought to you by**



### WHAT ARE BUTTON BATTERIES?



Button, disc and coin batteries are widely used in electronic devices such as hearing aids, thermometers, greeting cards, calculators, remote controls, children's toys, kitchen scales, watches, tea-light candles, and flashing jewellery.

Button batteries contain valuable natural resources that can be recycled into new products, reducing the need for mining raw materials from the natural environment.

### SAFETY WARNING



**Button batteries are extremely hazardous to children & vulnerable people**

Examples of vulnerable people include older people and people who have special needs or visual impairment.

### BE AWARE OF THE HAZARDS

#### **☠ If swallowed or inserted into the body, button batteries can lodge in the oesophagus, ears or noses resulting in internal burns**

The electric current in button batteries (not leaking battery acid) turns saliva into a caustic solution that can burn in as little as two hours. In Australia two children have died from button battery injuries.

#### **☠ Delayed symptoms**

Button batteries can be swallowed without choking or coughing. Children and vulnerable people may not be able to communicate about their experience. Unless someone sees them swallow a battery, parents or carers may be none the wiser.

#### **☠ Button batteries may be mistaken for pills**

Hearing aid users or those with poor eyesight may accidentally swallow button batteries.

#### **☠ Even low voltage can be dangerous**

Lithium batteries are dangerous even when they stop working as they still retain some voltage.

#### **☠ Risk of fire**

Some batteries present a low but real risk of catching fire if they are damaged or if their terminals short-circuit (see next page for details).

### IMPORTANT SAFETY INFORMATION

If you suspect a child or adult has swallowed or otherwise ingested a button battery:

- ☉ don't wait for symptoms to develop - immediately call the Poisons Information Centre: 13 11 26
- ☉ go straight to the hospital, not to a doctor
- ☉ prevent victims who may have swallowed a button battery eating or drinking. Do not induce vomiting
- ☉ if possible, take the device and the battery packaging to help you identify the battery type

### BUTTON BATTERY SAFETY TIPS

#### When buying new batteries or equipment

- ☉ Choose products with a sealed battery compartment.
- ☉ Choose products that prevent easy access to battery compartments.
- ☉ Only buy button batteries in childproof packaging.
- ☉ Give priority to products using rechargeable button batteries and those made with recycled content.
- ☉ Always read the directions before use.

#### Keep button battery products away from children or vulnerable people

- ☉ Ensure open packs of batteries are kept out of reach of children.
- ☉ Store batteries in a container that requires use of a tool, key or two or more independent AND simultaneous actions to open.
- ☉ Regularly check devices using button batteries to make sure battery compartments are secure.
- ☉ Duct tape over button battery compartments in devices. Batteries may come out if the product is dropped and the compartment breaks open.

#### Avoid mistaking button batteries for medicine

- ☉ Always look at medicine you intend to swallow.
- ☉ Turn on the lights, put on your glasses, read the label and look at the medicine itself.

#### Ensure used batteries are safely managed

**SEE NEXT PAGE FOR INFORMATION ON HOW TO SAFELY MANAGE USED BUTTON BATTERIES**



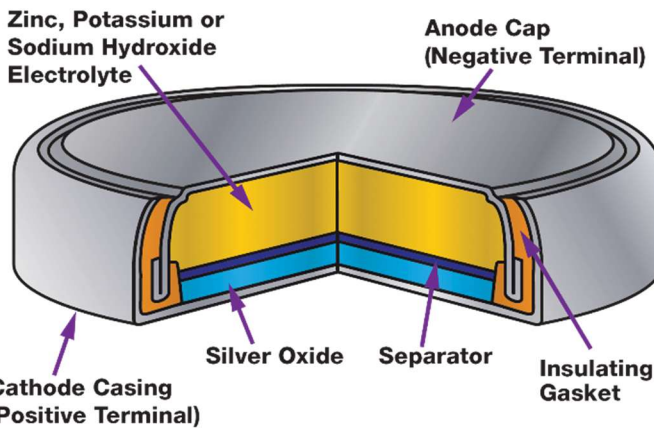


### FIRE SAFETY WARNING

**Button batteries have a low but real risk of igniting if they are damaged, not fully discharged, or if they short-circuit**

Batteries can cause fires in rubbish bins, in recycling and waste collection trucks, and in landfills.

Short-circuiting may occur if terminals touch other terminals or if they touch metal objects such as keys. Terminals are on the top and bottom of the battery.



### TIPS FOR SAFE DISPOSAL OF BUTTON BATTERIES AT THE END OF THEIR LIFE

- As soon as you have finished using a button battery put sticky tape around them to:
  - make them less attractive to children
  - prevent short-circuiting and avoid the low risk of having them catch fire.
- Once taped, store batteries in a child-proof container.
- Take batteries to a designated battery recycling drop-off location.

### WHAT TO AVOID

- Always keep used button batteries out of reach of children i.e. not in unsecure bins or draws.
- Avoid storing button batteries for long periods of time or near running water or in damp cupboards.
- Avoid disposing of button batteries in kerbside bins to prevent fires in collection trucks and landfills.

### HOW TO PROTECT BUTTON BATTERY TERMINALS

The best way to avoid a fire is to protect the terminals by preventing contact with other batteries or metal objects. This can be done by covering both sides of the battery with sticky tape as shown below.



This can be done for one or more batteries.

### WHY RECYCLE?

By delivering taped used button batteries to designated battery recycling drop-off centre you can:

- help to ensure toxic or valuable metals such as lithium, mercury, cobalt, or lithium are recovered
- prevent toxins from contaminating landfills
- reduce the risk of landfill fires. Such fires release toxic gas that can cause long-term health problems
- prevent fires from occurring in general rubbish and recycling collection trucks

**FIND A BATTERY RECYCLING DROP-OFF POINT NEAR YOU BY VISITING THE ABRI WEBSITE**

[www.batteryrecycling.org.au](http://www.batteryrecycling.org.au)

or go to

[www.recyclingnearyou.com.au](http://www.recyclingnearyou.com.au)

### FOR MORE INFORMATION

Visit the ABRI website for more information about batteries, battery hazards, or industry best practice.

### DID YOU FIND THIS GUIDANCE USEFUL?

If so, please consider joining ABRI to support the work we do to improve battery stewardship and recycling in Australia and internationally.