

Commo Batteries...

HANDLING IN THE HEAT

IT'S TOO HOT! I CAN'T TAKE IT ANY-MORE!

EVEN THAT BUNNY CAN'T SAVE US NOW!

HOW IRONIC! I WAS GOING TO POWER A FAN!!

I'D ASK TO BE DISCHARGED... BUT IT'S ALREADY HAPPENED!



In hot weather, proper storage and handling procedures for commo batteries are a must. Here are some storage and handling tips every commo equipment user and repairman, whether at a large storage facility or just in a unit, should know.

Make Sure You're Safe

Get your post fire department to help you pick a battery storage location and to inspect it periodically.

For large bulk storage of batteries, a sprinkler system is recommended. Small extinguishers will do the job for small fires of combustibles such as packaging. Lithium battery fires should only be handled by trained firefighters. Store them in an area with a sprinkler system, if possible.

Do not smoke, eat or drink in battery storage areas. An open flame could lead to an explosion and eating around toxins is never a good idea.

Personal protective equipment such as gloves, face shields and aprons must be available and must be worn whenever handling leaking or vented batteries.

When It's Too Darn Hot

Temperatures in battery storage and maintenance facilities must not exceed 130°F. Among the problems high heat causes are the loss of available capacity and, in the case of rechargeables, the loss of their capacity for recharging.

If the temperature in your storage area consistently hits the 110-degree mark, it's time to think about cooling off the area or finding another storage spot.

Remember, temperatures inside a MILVAN or similar container in SWA will exceed this. Read SB 11-6 for ideas on how to keep them as cool as possible. Try to find somewhere else to store your batteries.

Don't Mix 'em

Battery chemistries don't mix well with each other. Some combinations can cause explosions and others harmful gases. So segregate batteries in storage. Keep lead-acid batteries away from nickel-cadmium or nickel-metal hydride.

The same tools and materials must not be used between battery chemistries. So color code the tools. Pick a color for each type of battery a tool could be used on and mark the storage area, as well as the tool, with that color.

Do not mix new and used batteries. Each type needs its own storage area. Do not let used batteries pile up. Dispose of them quickly.

It's in the Package

Keep batteries in their original packaging until they are used. The original packaging helps you identify the batteries and does offer some protection from crushing, puncturing and shorting.

What Have You Got and What Shape are They In?

Periodically inspect stored batteries for defects such as bulges, cracks or leaks and monitor their expiration dates.

Keep only authorized batteries on hand and keep only the number that you need. It's a good idea to display in your storage area a list of available batteries and the equipment they're used in.

Know Your Metal

Watch out when using metal tools or materials that you don't short circuit a battery or cause sparks that could lead to an explosion.

Use Your Eyes, Nose and Ears

Check the packaging and the batteries for leaks, stains, bulges, cracks or other signs of damage.

Know the odors, such as the smell of rotten eggs, and sounds, such as hissing and popping, associated with abnormal battery behavior. Let your nose and ears tell you when you might have a problem with a stored battery.

Also, immediately disconnect any battery that is hot to the touch.

Train, Train, Train

Last, but certainly not least, all personnel should be properly trained in maintenance procedures, first aid, personal protection equipment and the hazards of battery maintenance operations.

Check out the following that are available on the LOGSA website:

<https://www.logsa.army.mil/etms/online.cfm>

The US Army supply bulletin, SB 11-6, *Communications Electronic Batteries, Supply and Management Data* and the US Army technical bulletin, TB 43-0134, *Battery Disposition and Disposal*.

