



Midtown highrise blaze sounds alarm about lithium-ion batteries - by Evan Lipstein

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A three-alarm fire erupted in a Midtown apartment building injuring 40 with some in serious and critical condition, according to the FDNY. The fire that began on the 20th floor was caused by a lithium-ion battery, according to commissioner Laura Kavanagh, "...the cause of the fire is a lithium-ion battery for a micro mobility device which the occupant was repairing. The fire was right behind the front door. We recovered at least five bikes from this apartment."

Lithium-ion batteries are used in various devices. These batteries are commonly used in cell phones, electronic cigarettes, laptops, tablets, electric cars, bikes and scooters. Lithium-ion batteries store a large amount of energy and can pose a threat if not treated properly. Sometimes due to poor quality or being damaged the batteries can overheat, catch fire, or even explode.

It's critically important that building owners, managers and residents be provided safety reminders about devices powered by lithium-ion batteries:

- When purchasing devices, be sure that the equipment has the Underwriters Laboratories (UL) Mark. The UL Mark shows that the product has been safety tested.
- Follow the manufacturer's instructions for charging and storage.
- Do not charge a device under your pillow, on your bed, or a couch.
- Always use the manufacturer's cord and power adapter made specifically for the device.
- Keep batteries/devices at room temperature. Do not place in direct sunlight.
- Store batteries away from anything flammable.
- If a battery overheats or you notice an odor, change in shape/color, leaking, or odd noises from a device discontinue use immediately. If safe to do so, move the device away from anything that can catch fire and call 911.

Proper disposal is key as well. Putting lithium-ion batteries in the household trash is illegal. Proper disposal is to take the battery to a recycling location which can easily be found by visiting <https://www1.nyc.gov/assets/dsny/site/services/harmful-products/batteries-harmful>.

Fire safety rules must be followed. The Fire Department of the City of New York (FDNY) requires buildings install "Close the Door" signs as a reminder on the public hallway side of stairwell doors. The mandated sign must read: "In a fire, close all doors behind you! Keep fire and smoke out of building hallways and stairs. Keep apartment and stairwell doors closed at all other times. Protect your neighbors and your home!"

Also, critically important are FDNY fire safety notices which are also required by law to protect lives.

The purpose of the fire and emergency preparedness notice serves to inform building residents and building staff about evacuation procedures and to provide other guidance in the event of a fire or non-fire emergency in the building or occupancy. The required FDNY fire safety notices are signs required to be mounted on the inside of every dwelling unit door of each dwelling unit in the building and in a conspicuous location near any common mailbox area customarily used by building occupants, or if there is no common mailbox area, in a conspicuous location in or near the elevators or main stairwell.

Make sure your property checks on the self-closing mechanism for every apartment and stair door and has the required "Close the Door" and fire safety notice signs. These essential safety measures can save lives!

Hyline Safety Company offers the assorted signs and consulting services needed to comply with these important local law requirements. Please reach out if you need our assistance.

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