Protecting Clients, Staff and Communities:

Mobility Scooter Battery Charging and Storage Guidance



Mobility scooters play an important role in supporting independence, mobility and quality of life for many clients. However, the lithium-ion batteries that power these devices can pose a significant fire risk if they are not stored, maintained and charged safely.

A tragic fire at a South Australian retirement village in January 2024, reportedly involving a mobility scooter battery charging overnight, highlights the importance of safe charging practices, early fire detection and emergency preparedness (ABC News).

This guidance provides practical information and risk management strategies to help aged care and disability providers create safer environments, protect people and property, and support the safe use, storage and charging of mobility scooters.

Key Safety and Risk Management

Supporting client independence and maintaining a safe environment go hand in hand. Effective risk management helps facilities identify potential hazards and ensures appropriate controls are in place to protect people and property.

For mobility scooters, the key risks include lithium-ion battery fires, unsafe charging practices and the obstruction of evacuation routes.

By implementing clear policies, maintaining equipment, providing appropriate charging facilities and ensuring staff and clients understand safe practices, facilities can reduce these risks and support a safer environment for everyone.

In NSW, lithium-ion battery fires increased by 64% in 2023. Fire and Rescue NSW responds to approximately 5.2 lithium-ion battery fires per week.

(Fire and Rescue NSW)

Fire Protection

Appropriate fire protection systems help detect incidents early, reduce fire spread and support safe evacuation. Charging areas should be included in the facility's fire safety and emergency management arrangements.

In NSW, statistics show there were 332 battery related fires in 2025, which is an increase from 323 in 2024 and 272 in 2023.

(Fire and Rescue NSW)

Fire Protection Measures

- Ensure scooters do not obstruct access to fire-fighting equipment, electrical switchboards or emergency exits.
- Provide purpose-built, ventilated charging stations or dedicated charging rooms where practicable.
- Install automatic fire detection connected to the building fire alarm system.
- Ensure alarms are monitored on-site or through an approved monitoring service.
- Where possible, configure alarm systems to automatically isolate power to charging equipment when an alarm is activated.
- Provide appropriate **specialised** extinguishers for lithium-ion battery fires and ensure staff are trained in their use.



Storage and Charging Management

The following measures help minimise the risk of battery fires and ensure safe storage and charging practices.

Safety Measures

- Implement a **facility-wide policy** covering scooter storage and charging.
- Use designated storage and charging areas only.
- Keep corridors, stairwells, exits and evacuation routes clear.
- Conduct regular risk assessments of storage and charging arrangements.
- Inspect batteries regularly and immediately remove damaged, swollen or defective batteries from service.



Fire in communal hallway (2025)

A mobility scooter charging in a communal hallway, at a facility in Guilford UK, caught fire, highlighting the risks of charging battery-powered devices in escape routes and shared spaces.

(Guilford Dragon News)



Apartment Fire, Victoria

Two residents were injured in a South Melbourne apartment fire in May 2025 after an e-scooter was charged using an incompatible charger. Investigators identified the charger as the cause of the fire.

(Energy Safe Victoria)

Shed Fire, South Australia

Lithium batteries sitting idle in a shed spark a fire that destroyed a shed, caravan and machinery in Victor Harbor in South Australia.

(Sydney Morning Herald)

Charging Requirements

Safe charging practices help prevent overheating, battery failure and fire.

- Use only manufacturer-approved chargers.
- Limit the number of scooters charging in any one location.
- Avoid extension leads and power boards where possible. If used, ensure they are compliant, undamaged and not overloaded.
- Ensure scooters are switched off before charging.
- Avoid charging scooters overnight. If overnight charging is necessary, it should occur only in designated charging areas with appropriate fire detection and monitoring arrangements.
- Charge scooters and batteries only on non-combustible surfaces such as concrete, stone or tiles and maintain separation from exits and windows.
- Ensure adequate ventilation around batteries during charging.
- Protect charging areas from damage caused by impacts from scooters, trolleys or equipment.
- Arrange regular inspection and testing of portable chargers by a qualified technician.
- Consider installing dedicated electrical circuits for charging areas where practicable, with Residual Current Device (RCD) protection and surge protection.

Long-Term Storage

Unused scooters and batteries should be managed appropriately to maintain battery condition and minimise fire risk.

- Do not store or charge inactive scooters in communal areas.
- Charge stored batteries as recommended by the manufacturer.
- Store removed batteries at approximately 50–70% charge.
- Store batteries in a cool, dry location.
- Keep stored batteries and scooters away from combustible materials.



Store lithium-ion batteries at 15-25°C and with proper ventilation to prevent overheating and degradation.

(The Australian Institute of Health and Safety)

Training and Supervision

Management should ensure staff and clients understand safe storage and charging practices.

Training Measures

- Provide clients and their families with information on safe charging, care and maintenance of mobility scooters.
- Train staff to identify unsafe batteries, chargers and charging practices.
- Direct clients to approved charging and storage areas.
- Clearly sign all designated storage and charging locations.
- Provide regular refresher training to reinforce safe practices.

Conclusion

Mobility scooters provide valuable benefits for many clients, supporting independence, mobility and participation in everyday life. By adopting safe storage, charging and maintenance practices, facilities can help ensure these benefits are realised without compromising safety.

Through proactive risk management, staff education and appropriate fire protection measures, aged care and disability providers can reduce the risk of battery-related incidents, support safe evacuation and create safer environments for clients, staff, visitors and the broader community.

Next Step

Complete the Mobility Scooter Storage and Charging Safety Checklist to identify and address any gaps in storage, charging, training and fire protection arrangements.

REFERENCES

- **ABC News -** Mobility scooter battery believed to have sparked retirement village fire that killed elderly resident 16 January 2024
- **Fire and Rescue NSW Fire Statistics -** https://www.fire.nsw.gov.au/about-us/publications/open-data
- **Guilford Dragon News -** Surrey Fire & Rescue Service Urges Residents to Stay Safe with Lithium-ion Batteries 11 March 2025
- **Energy Safe Victoria -** E-scooter charging warning as South Melbourne unit fire injures two 27 May 2025
- **The Sydney Morning Herald -** Lithium batteries spark shed fire south of Adelaide 30 August 2026
- **The Australian Institute of Health and Safety -** Managing Lithium Battery Risks: From Supply Chain to Storage



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