

NH RECYCLES

2101 Dover Road
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FULL OF SCRAP

Safety Special Edition

Fire Prevention & Safe Materials Handling at Transfer Stations

Across New England, transfer station operators are seeing a growing number of hazardous materials entering facilities — **especially lithium-ion batteries and pressurized cylinders.**

When these materials are crushed, punctured, or improperly stored, they can cause serious fires, explosions, and injuries.

This **special edition of Full of Scrap** highlights practical safety guidance to help prevent incidents and keep facilities safe.



Top 5 Causes of Fires at Transfer Stations

1. **Lithium-ion batteries**
2. Disposable vapes and small electronics with embedded batteries
3. Propane cylinders or other fuel containers in scrap metal
4. Hot loads or ash

Quick Prevention Tips

- Watch for loose, embedded, or damaged batteries
- Implement 2-step scrap metal separation practices
- Separate pressurized cylinders and store in a covered, ventilated space
- Ask residents if ash is cooled

BATTERY DISPOSAL & RESPONSE



Lithium-Ion Battery Disposal Ban

Lithium-ion batteries are banned from disposal in NH's landfills and incinerators – **meaning no rechargeable Li-ion batteries can go in the trash or mixed recycling at your facility.**

These batteries are found in phones, laptops, power tools, e-bikes, and many other devices. When they are **crushed, punctured, or compacted**, they can ignite or explode.

Lithium-ion fires are intense, release toxic chemicals, are difficult to extinguish, and are dangerous for operators, facility buildings, and equipment.

Because of these risks, NH added lithium-ion batteries to the list of materials **prohibited from disposal under RSA 149-M:27.**

What NOT to Do During a Battery Fire

Do NOT:

- Crush batteries
- Pick up burning batteries
- Handle with bare hands
- Assume the fire is out



Battery Recycling Guide

Best Practices for Attendants

- **Spot and separate** Li-ion batteries and devices (phones, scooters, tablets, etc.)
- **Use safe containers** - store batteries in labeled, non-conductive covered plastic pails away from combustible materials.
- **Label** each pail as 'Universal Waste' and include battery type.
- **Tape terminals or bag** lithium and button cell batteries with clear, non-conductive tape.
- **Do NOT dispose of batteries in household trash.**
- **Educate users** - remind residents and haulers that rechargeable batteries must be recycled separately.
- **Know recycling options** - direct people to your facility's designated battery drop-off area or other recycling programs

Common Battery Types

- Lithium-Ion
- Lithium Primary
- Button Cell
- NiMH
- NiCD
- Alkaline
- Lead Acid
- Specialty Batteries

REMEMBER: Lithium batteries may reignite hours later!

LITHIUM-ION BATTERY SAFETY



Safe Battery Handling

1. Inspect Batteries

Look for:

- Bulging or swelling
- Cracks or punctures
- Burn marks
- Heat or unusual odor



If damaged:

Place in **DDR kit immediately**

2. Protect Terminals

Prevent short circuits:

- Put clear tape on terminals
- Bag small batteries
- Keep batteries separate from metal

3. Safe Storage

Store batteries in:

- Covered plastic pails
- Labeled containers
- Dry and shaded areas

Avoid:

- Direct sunlight
- Overfilling containers
- Storing near combustibles

Quick Tip

If it **charges with a cord**, assume it contains a lithium-ion battery.

What should I do with a device that is rechargeable, but the battery is not removable?

If a device has an **embedded battery**, place the entire item with your **electronics recycling**. **Do not attempt to remove the battery yourself!**

What if I don't know what type of battery it is?

Send a photo to **NH Recycles** for assistance. While waiting for guidance, **tape the terminals** and store the battery safely.

Does NH Recycles have vendors that recycle batteries?

Yes. NH Recycles works with **vetted vendors that properly recycle batteries in accordance with applicable regulations**.

Do batteries need to be sorted by type?

Sorting batteries by chemistry is recommended. However, many vendors accept **mixed batteries**, though a **sorting fee may apply**. Regardless of sorting, **always protect battery terminals**, especially for lithium-ion batteries.

Can alkaline batteries be recycled with scrap metal?

No. Although alkaline batteries present a lower fire risk, they **should not be mixed with scrap metal**.

PROPANE & SAFETY RESOURCES



Propane Tank Storage

Propane tanks arriving at your facility may still contain propane and should be handled with care. **Proper storage helps reduce the risk of fire, explosion, or accidental release.** Like lithium batteries, pressurized cylinders can become extremely dangerous if crushed, punctured, or struck by equipment.

Recommended storage practices:

- 1-pound cylinders should be stored in a labeled drum protected from weather.
- Larger tanks should be stored in a designated, organized area where they are protected from tipping over or being struck by vehicles or equipment.
- Avoid storing tanks directly on the ground. Store on pallets or racks whenever possible.
- Ensure clear signage, including “No Smoking” and “Propane Tank” signs.
- Store tanks in a well-ventilated area away from buildings and ignition sources.

Important Safety Reminder

Do not remove valves from propane tanks.

Removing valves is dangerous and requires **special licensing under state regulations.**

Solid Waste Safety Summits

Lithium-ion batteries are a growing fire risk at transfer stations and recycling facilities. NH Recycles is hosting **FREE Solid Waste Safety Summits** – in person and online – to help operators, municipalities, and first responders prevent fires and respond safely when incidents occur. **Register on our website!** A prerecorded Summit is on our website, or join us LIVE in Keene on **June 25!**

In case you missed it, we changed our name to **NH Recycles** from NRRA last May to better reflect our service area and work we do. While our name may have changed, our services have not – we continue to welcome and support our members within and beyond NH! Get more recycling education, news, updates, and best practices through NH Recycles’ bi-weekly email newsletter, Full of Scrap. **Sign up at www.NHrecycles.org/newsletter or scan the QR code below!**

SCAN
ME!

