



# SAFETY ALERT

## Shared Learnings



### INCIDENT TITLE:

**Sparks coming from a cardboard waste battery box**

### TIME AND DATE OF INCIDENT:

**05 Jan 2023 : 9:30AM**

### INCIDENT DETAIL :

While moving a box of scrap batteries that was being used as a door stop, sparks were seen coming from the box.

An 18v power tool battery was arcing against other batteries causing sparking and a potential for a fire.

This cardboard box was used to store old batteries that have been replaced from various IO boards and other tools and equipment on site.

This box of batteries had been left unattended over the Christmas leave period.

### LEARNINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS FROM THIS INCIDENT:

The good news is most batteries are accepted through normal waste management centres, even Bunnings Warehouse takes them with certain controls applied. They all ask that you tape your batteries before placing them in any collection bin, as used batteries may still contain residual charge that can create a spark leading to a potential fire.

Simply taping the terminals top and bottom, using a non-conductive tape can reduce this risk.

A heavy-duty plastic battery bucket should be used at each site and accountability for regular disposal must be assigned to an individual or incorporated into the facilities maintenance (FM) contract.

The list below are the batteries not accepted and require a more specialist disposal:

- Leaking or damaged batteries,
- Car or truck batteries and mobile phone batteries.

### INITIAL RESPONSE AND INVESTIGATION OUTCOMES :

Batteries were initially moved to a metal bin to remove risk of fire but after some quick research we found that they should be stored in plastic bins, so they were transferred to a plastic container.

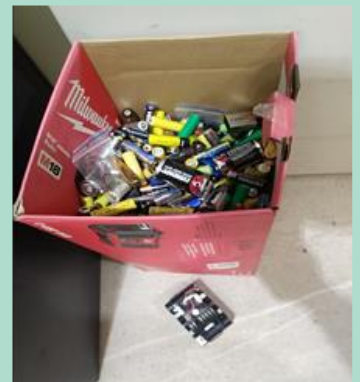
The event was reported, and further investigation was required for a standard business approach as it was assumed used battery collection wasn't limited to the West Wind site only.

An action was assigned to Meridian's Inventory Coordinator to research what to do with old batteries. Wellington City Council recycling were contacted and released information, through Waste Management, on the correct disposal protocols.

### PHOTO:



**Batteries taped correctly**



**Photo of used batteries on site**

**THE CORPORATE SAFETY AND HEALTH TEAM ARE CURRENTLY WORKING ON SYSTEMS TO SUPPORT THE ABOVE LEARNINGS. IF INTERESTED IN VIEWING THE FULL INVESTIGATION REPORT FOR THIS INCIDENT, IT CAN BE FOUND HERE:**

**Safety Manager ID 1315389**