

REVISED LEGISLATIVE DIGEST
(December 12, 2023 - Amended in Board)

[Fire Code - Lithium-Ion Batteries in Powered Mobility Devices]

Ordinance amending the Fire Code to provide fire protection standards for the charging and storage of lithium-ion batteries used in powered mobility devices (such as electric bikes, scooters, skateboards, and hoverboards), prohibit use of damaged lithium-ion batteries in such devices, prohibit use of lithium-ion batteries assembled or reconditioned using cells removed from used batteries in such devices, and require the Fire Department to conduct an informational campaign; affirming the Planning Department’s determination under the California Environmental Quality Act; and directing the Clerk of the Board of Supervisors to forward this Ordinance to the California Building Standards Commission upon final passage.

Existing Law

The existing Fire Code does not address the charging and storage of lithium-ion batteries used in powered mobility devices, the use of damaged lithium-ion batteries in powered mobility devices, or the assembly, sale, or transfer of reassembled or reconditioned lithium-ion batteries for powered mobility devices.

Amendments to Current Law

The proposed legislation amends to the Fire Code to provide fire protection standards for the use, charging, and storage of lithium-ion batteries used in powered mobility devices, including requiring that such devices are charged in accordance with manufacturer’s instructions and the applicable listing standard, requiring inspection of batteries subject to a potential mechanism of damage, and setting certain minimum safety standards for the charging and storage of such devices. The proposed legislation would also make it unlawful to assemble, recondition, sell, offer for sale, give, or transfer a reassembled or reconditioned lithium-ion battery for use in a powered mobility device. The proposed legislation also includes a requirement that the Fire Department develop an informational campaign to educate the public on the fire risks posed by powered mobility devices and lithium-ion batteries.

Background Information

The incidence of lithium-ion battery-based fires has increased with the growing prevalence of such batteries in consumer products. The fire risk posed by lithium-ion batteries used in powered mobility devices, such as electric bikes, scooters, skateboards and hoverboards, is particularly high due to the size of batteries necessary to power such devices, the frequency

of collisions and corresponding damage to batteries, and frequency of re-charging batteries for such devices that are often used on a daily basis. These risks are heightened in San Francisco due to local conditions, which include dense development, narrow streets, and traffic congestion. The proposed legislation seeks to mitigate the fire risk posed by powered mobility devices using lithium-ion batteries by providing for certain safety standards and a public informational campaign.

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