

Safety Alert

February 2018

A lithium polymer battery caught fire while left to charge on a desk.

Background

A lithium polymer battery was the energy source for an interactive musical instrument prototype. The battery had been purchased one month earlier and had been charged on one other occasion.

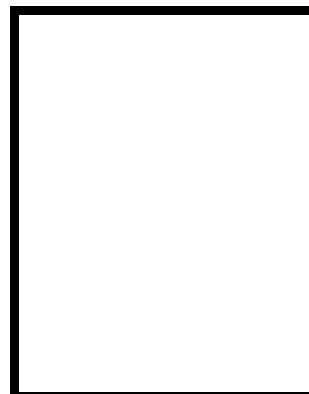
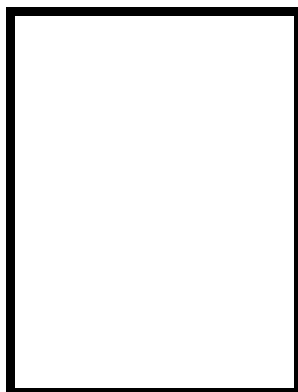
At the time of the incident, the battery had been placed on charge in the prototype and left temporarily unattended on a desk. Approximately 5 minutes into the charging process, a student working in the area heard some crackling and popping noises followed shortly by what was reported to sound like a gust of wind. The student turned to see a fire on the desk.

What was done well

- x Students and staff worked quickly to raise the alarm and extinguish the fire.
- x Swift and appropriate action prevented the occurrence of any injuries and minimal damage to equipment and property.
- x The supplier was notified of the incident.

Call for local Areas to take

- x Ensure LiPo batteries and chargers are placed on heat-resistant, non-flammable and non-conductive surfaces away from any flammable materials.
- x Never leave the process of charging a LiPo battery unsupervised.
- x Follow all manufacturer's instructions.
- x Ensure a dry fire extinguisher is available when charging/ storing LiPo batteries.



Further Information:
Contact your Faculty Health & Safety Coordinator
<http://safety.unsw.edu.au/contacts>

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