



# WOODSIDE FIRE PROTECTION DISTRICT

FIRE PREVENTION BUREAU  
808 PORTOLA ROAD PORTOLA VALLEY, CA. 94028  
(650) 851-1594

[WWW.WOODSIDEFIRE.ORG](http://WWW.WOODSIDEFIRE.ORG)

Selena Brown - Public Education Officer/Emergency Preparedness Coordinator

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## **Safeguarding Your Home: Understanding Lithium-Ion Batteries and Fire Prevention**

In an age where clean energy and smart technology are becoming increasingly integrated into our daily lives, lithium-ion batteries have emerged as a powerhouse of convenience and sustainability. From electric vehicles to energy storage solutions, these batteries have transformed the way we power our world. However, it's crucial for residents to be aware of potential fire hazards associated with lithium-ion batteries in homes and take proactive measures to prevent fires. In this article, we'll explore why fires can start from lithium-ion batteries, provide simplified guidance on fire safety, and discuss specific regulations within the Woodside Fire Protection District.

### ***Why Do Lithium-Ion Battery Fires Occur in Homes?***

Lithium-ion batteries are widely used in various applications, including backup power systems and electric vehicles, due to their high energy density and efficiency. However, several factors can lead to fires involving these batteries:

**Overheating:** When lithium-ion batteries become too hot, they can experience thermal runaway, a chain reaction of overheating that may lead to a fire. Overheating can occur due to overcharging, manufacturing defects, or physical damage to the battery.

**Short Circuits:** Any damage to the battery, such as punctures or cracks, can result in a short circuit, which can generate heat and potentially ignite the battery.

**Incorrect Installation:** In the case of backup batteries mounted on the outside of homes, improper installation or exposure to extreme environmental conditions can compromise their safety.

### ***Fire Prevention Tips for Residents***

Preventing fires involving lithium-ion batteries in your home and safeguarding your property is of paramount importance. Here are some essential tips to help you reduce the risk of such fires:

**Follow Manufacturer Guidelines:** When installing lithium-ion battery systems, adhere to the manufacturer's installation instructions and safety guidelines. Ensure that the installation complies with local regulations.

**Regular Maintenance:** Conduct routine maintenance checks on your battery system as recommended by the manufacturer. Look for signs of damage or wear and address them promptly.

**Temperature Control:** Maintain a controlled temperature environment for your battery system. Extreme temperatures can stress the batteries and increase the risk of overheating.

**Fire Detection and Suppression:** Consider installing fire detection and suppression systems designed for lithium-ion battery fires. These systems can help detect fires early and suppress them effectively but not extinguish them. Always call 911 to have fire crews mitigate the extinguishment.

**Emergency Response Plan:** Develop an emergency response plan that includes information about the location and type of battery system in your home. Communicate this plan with your family and local emergency responders.

**Safe Charging Practices:** Do not leave lithium-ion batteries to charge on combustible surfaces such as sofas or beds. Use a designated charging area with non-flammable materials. When going away, unplug any incidental items such as toothbrushes and cell phone chargers.

**Purchase a Class D Fire Extinguisher:** In case of a lithium-ion battery fire, having a Class D fire extinguisher on hand can be highly effective for fire suppression. Class D extinguishers are designed for metal fires, including those involving lithium-ion batteries.

### **Regulations in Woodside Fire Protection District**

Within the Woodside Fire Protection District, it's important to note that the installation of wall backup batteries, such as the Tesla Powerwall, inside homes is generally not recommended due to the high rate of flame spread and toxic gases released during a fire. If such a system is installed inside a home or garage, specific requirements, including the installation of a detection/alarm system, must be met. These specific requirements are essential to enhance safety and provide early detection, allowing residents to evacuate their homes. It is strongly recommended to install 'Electrical Energy Storage Systems' on the exterior side of the home, in a detached garage, or at another location separate from your residence."

### **Understanding the Risks**

Take note that there isn't significant publicly available data specifically focusing on Tesla Powerwall or similar battery backup systems and their direct impact on wildfires. It's important to note that battery backup systems like the Tesla Powerwall are designed to provide power during outages and not to start or contribute to wildfires. Their safety largely depends on proper installation, maintenance, and adherence to safety guidelines, as discussed in this article.

Residents should be aware that owning a backup battery system, whether installed indoors or outdoors, comes with inherent risks. The decision to install and use such a system should be made with a clear understanding of these risks and a commitment to follow safety guidelines and local regulations.

By understanding the potential fire risks associated with lithium-ion batteries, following safety measures, and staying informed about local regulations, residents can enjoy the benefits of these innovative technologies while keeping their homes and communities safe from fire hazards. Stay informed, stay vigilant, and prioritize safety in your energy choices.