



NEWS RELEASE

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West Sussex residents urged not to bin batteries during the festive period

Don't bin your batteries and risk a fire this Christmas – that's the call from Recycling Centres across West Sussex.

As people dust off festive fairy lights and light-up ornaments, there's often a selection of dead or old batteries waiting to be found amongst last year's Christmas decorations.

Nearly a quarter of people across the UK admit binning used batteries, and many people are unaware batteries are pre-built inside smaller items – it only takes a single battery to spark a fire.

As many residents are replacing batteries and electricals in the run-up to Christmas, West Sussex County Council is urging people not to throw used batteries or electricals in the bin or recycling because of the risk they could be setting off a blaze.

Batteries are damaged from crushing during the sorting and collection process causing paper, plastics and other waste to catch alight.

Often batteries have some remaining charge and devices including mobile phones, e-cigarettes, and laptops are known to have caught fire in waste collection lorries and local sorting facilities in recent years.

Deborah Urquhart, Cabinet Member for Environment and Climate Change said: "We've seen a rise in the number of fires from batteries or electrical items in collection vehicles and where we process waste - it only takes one spark to cause a blaze."

"Both alkaline and lithium batteries contain hazardous metals and chemicals that harm the environment if they aren't responsibly recycled – that's why you'll see battery collection bins at so many major retailers, and of course at our own Recycling Centres in West Sussex."

Steve Read, County Council Director of Environment and Public Protection said: "Batteries pose a serious risk when placed into general waste or recycling bins and mixed with paper, cardboard, plastic or other recyclable materials.

"Lives are at stake, so our message is simple – please don't bin your batteries and risk a fire this Christmas.

“It’s also important that people don’t throw away old batteries from power tools, remote controlled toys, e-scooters, tablets, or any battery into their recycling bin. It’s extremely dangerous.”

To find your nearest battery recycling point at a shop or supermarket where you live, visit the [Recycle Now website](#) and enter your postcode.

For more details on what you can recycle and where, the County Council has produced a handy A to Z of recycling guide on its [website](#), with tips on how to dispose waste correctly.

Recycling Centres in West Sussex are open during the festive period and will be closed to give staff a well-deserved break from midday on Christmas Eve and reopen on Monday 27th December. Mobile waste services in Witterings and Selsey will also close on Thursday 23rd and 30th December.



West Sussex Fire & Rescue Officers extinguishing burning rubbish from a refuse truck, caused by a suspected rogue battery.



The county council has reported a rise in the number of fires from batteries or electrical items in collection vehicles and at waste processing facilities.



Battery collection points are available across Recycling Centres in West Sussex. To find your nearest battery recycling point at a shop or supermarket, visit the Recycle Now [website](#) and enter your postcode.

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