



Lithium ion battery fire causes

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Lithium-ion batteries used in E-bikes and other electronic mobility devices are now a leading cause of fires in New York City following their popularity surged during the pandemic's delivery boom, FDNY officials say.

FDNY Chief Fire Marshal Daniel Flynn told The Post that fires related to lithium-ion batteries have gone up nearly nine-fold since the pandemic, with more blazes related to the batteries happening in the last two months than in all of 2019.

The fire chief attributed the popularity of the e-bikes and scooters to the "gig economy boom in 2020, which saw people purchase the devices on the cheap-side in droves to do delivery jobs.

"People bought these devices some three years ago, and now they're aging," he said, noting that many don't know the dangers caused by the wear-and-tear on the batteries' energy cells.

"We've seen people try to fix it or modify it themselves, go to shops from unauthorized vendors or take it on themselves to replace the old batteries," he added. "We tell people not to go with the cheapest option and seek out the manufacturer directly."

While there were only 30 fires related to the batteries in 2019, the number more than tripled by 2021, with 104 fires reported. That year also saw four fatalities, while no one was reported to have died from the blazes in 2019 or 2020.

The amount of battery-related fires more than doubled the following year, with 220 fires reported, as well as six deaths confirmed. Last year, the FDNY reported 268 fires involving lithium-ion batteries, 150 injuries and 18 deaths.

FDNY Commissioner Laura Kavanagh vowed in February to continue cracking down on businesses that offer to replace individual battery cells from old ones, a fire code violation that creates what she called "Frankenstein batteries."

But while New York has pushed businesses and consumers to follow new UL standards for the batteries, Flynn noted that there was little the city could do about older units coming in from other states that do not require such regulations.

"Poorly manufactured and poorly handled lithium-ion batteries are ticking time bombs in American homes and businesses," Torres said during a congressional hearing mid-February urging passage of the



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Setting Consumer Standards For Lithium-ion Batteries Act.

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Web: <https://sumthingtasty.co.za/contact-us/>

Email: energystorage2000@gmail.com

WhatsApp: 8613816583346

