



SAFETY ALERT

Date: March 25, 2007
From: Jerry Zebor CSP, HSE Manager
To: All Hands
Subject: RECHARGABLE BATTERY FIRE HAZARD

Level: **IMPORTANT**

Several incidents have recently occurred bringing our attention to the hazards of routine rechargeable battery use.

1. A fire occurred on a barge in the GOM. No injury to personnel. A personal DVD player was being recharged on a bed. The battery overheated, caused the bedding material to combust and burned the room. The fire was extinguished before spreading beyond the room. There was significant damage to the barge as a result of the fire.
2. A near-miss fire incident occurred in a shop area. No injury to personnel. A recharged 18v portable drill was set on the floor in preparation for some work. An employee noticed the drill smoking from the battery module and was able to detach the battery from the drill body before a fire could start. Although the battery module was newer, it indicated obvious signs of damage from overheating.

In both cases, investigations did not result in a conclusive root cause other than the common factor of rechargeable batteries. Overheating of rechargeable batteries does occur. There are many electrical devices in use that rely on rechargeable batteries.

1. When recharging a device, monitor the heat of the battery if possible and ensure there is no contact with combustible material during the recharge period.
2. When not using a rechargeable device, secure it in such a manner as to avoid contact with combustible material.
3. When finished using a rechargeable tool, stow with the battery module removed.

If you have any questions, comments or require further information regarding this issue, please contact me.