

Laptop battery fire

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A laptop battery exploded and caught fire.

What happened?

The incident happened in a workshop setting. The laptop was being used to control certain operations, which had been recently completed. The laptop itself was switched off at the time but was on charge at the mains.

The laptop was on a wooden topped work bench. A loud bang was heard from the laptop, after which it caught fire. Crew were nearby and immediately extinguished the fire by using the adjacent 3 kg CO2 extinguisher.

Owing to the quick reaction in extinguishing the fire, the vessel's General Alarm was not activated.

Having extinguished the laptop, it was safely removed from the power source and removed to a safe location on the steel deck outside where it could cool down.

What went wrong? What were the causes?

The cause of the fire was the overheating and subsequent partial explosion of the laptop lithium-ion battery.

The last portable appliance testing (PAT) of this item had been conducted three months before.

What lessons were learnt?

- There was a quick and professional response to the fire which swiftly brought it under control before it spread.
- The laptop was in date for PAT.

What actions were taken?

- Address the issue of potential faulty laptop batteries – full asset review to establish whether desktops and laptops need replacing.

IOGP Life Saving Rules:



Energy isolation

- Ensure all laptops are tested and inspected as required by PAT.
- Consider whether or not laptops should be left unattended whilst plugged in.

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