

E-bike batteries blamed for 22 NYC fires, 2 deaths this year

February 24 2023



A delivery worker rides his electric bicycle past the New York Stock Exchange, March 16, 2020, in New York. Lithium ion batteries used to power electric bicycles and scooters have already sparked 22 fires that caused 36 injuries and two deaths in New York City this year, four times the number of fires linked to the batteries by this time last year, city officials said Friday, Feb. 24, 2023. Credit: AP Photo/John Minchillo, File

Lithium ion batteries [used to power electric bicycles and scooters](#) have already sparked 22 fires that caused 36 injuries and two deaths in New York City this year, four times the number of fires linked to the batteries by this time last year, officials said Friday.

Fire Commissioner Laura Kavanagh said Mayor Eric Adams' administration is "coming at this problem from every single angle," including working with the City Council and the federal Consumer Product Safety Commission on additional regulations for the batteries and educating the public on their proper use and storage.

"These are incredibly dangerous devices, and we must make sure that members of the community are handling them properly and using them safely," Kavanagh said at a briefing on [public safety](#).

Many of the fires blamed on the batteries have been caused by malfunctioning devices left to charge overnight and placed in a hallway or near a door where they can trap people inside a burning apartment.

Three children and an adult were injured this month when [a charging battery started a fire](#) in their upper Manhattan apartment at 1:30 a.m., [officials](#) said.



A bicycle food delivery worker rides his e-bike through heavy snow, Feb. 1, 2021, in the Soho neighborhood of New York. Lithium ion batteries used to power electric bicycles and scooters have already sparked 22 fires that caused 36 injuries and two deaths in New York City this year, four times the number of fires linked to the batteries by this time last year, city officials said Friday, Feb. 24, 2023. Credit: AP Photo/Robert Bumsted, File

Fire Department Chief of Operations John Esposito said after the Feb. 5 blaze that when the battery overheated and sparked a [fire](#), "it blocked the egress out of the apartment, trapping the family."

Kavanagh said the e-bike batteries "present often an immediate inability to exit one's room or one's apartment or one's home. So it's really critical that we work with all our partners up here in government around

enforcement, around education, around combating the hazards that these present to citizens and first responders."

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