



FIRE HAZARD WITH REMOTE-CONTROLLED HELICOPTERS AND AIRPLANES

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WASHINGTON, D.C. - Playing with remote-controlled helicopters and airplanes can be fun, but the U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC) is concerned about an emerging fire hazard from the battery technology being used with these toys. CPSC is urging consumers to follow manufacturer's instructions when charging toys that contain rechargeable lithium batteries.

Rechargeable lithium batteries (lithium-ion or lithium polymer) are increasingly being used in toys because the technology is lighter. However, rechargeable lithium batteries have a lot of energy in a small package, so consumers should use caution when charging and handling them. These batteries are charged with a transmitter or a charging adapter. Overcharging them can result in overheating, fire, and/or an explosion.

Since November 2007, CPSC has received 26 reports of remote-controlled helicopters igniting while being charged and one incident of a helicopter that ignited while flying. These reports involve minor burns and minor property damage.

"CPSC has received dozens of reports of incidents and injuries involving remote-controlled helicopters igniting," said Nancy Nord, CPSC Acting Chairman. "We are urging consumers to follow simple safety tips to prevent future incidents and injuries."

To promote the safe use of remote-controlled toys that contain rechargeable lithium batteries, CPSC recommends the following:

- Do not leave the toy unattended while charging it.
- Battery charging should be done by adults.
- Charge the toy on a non-flammable surface and keep it away from flammable items.
- Turn the charger off when the toy's battery is charged, and always unplug it from the toy.
- Disconnect AC wall chargers from outlets while not in use.
- If the toy has been damaged, immediately stop use, unplug, and safely move the toy away from flammable materials.
- Follow the manufacturer's instructions for charging the toy. Do NOT charge longer than recommended.

To see this release on CPSC's web site, please go to:

<http://www.cpsc.gov/cpscpub/prerele/prhtml08/08189.html>



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