



CALIFORNIA STATE ASSEMBLY
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Fact Sheet

PROPOSED BILL

AB 841 addresses the increasing exposure to toxic chemicals that firefighters face during lithium-ion battery fires. This bill directs the Office of the State Fire Marshal, in consultation with Cal-OSHA, to create a working group to recommend improved personal protective equipment (PPE) and decontamination procedures to keep firefighters safe and healthy.

BACKGROUND

California's ambitious green energy goals have led to a rapid proliferation of lithium-ion batteries, placing the state second only to China in terms of the amount of utility-scale battery storage facilities and electric vehicle adoption. The state is also a leader in the number of commercial and residential lithium-ion battery storage systems to accompany the state's vast solar supply.

Alongside the increase in batteries, there has been an increase in battery fires. In 2021, a battery storage facility fire occurred in Orange County. In 2024, another fire broke out in Otay Mesa, lasting 11 days. In January 2025, the world's largest facility in Moss Landing caught fire and also burned for 11 days. Just 10 days later, several electric vehicles caught fire in a structure fire in Long Beach.

PROBLEM

California firefighters increasingly face lithium-ion battery fires, yet protective gear and decontamination protocols have not kept pace with this evolving threat. Lithium-ion battery fires expose firefighters to toxic metals and semi-volatile organic compounds, which existing cleaning and denominational processes do not effectively remove.

These deficiencies leave firefighters continuously and increasingly exposed to serious health risks, as demonstrated by a 2021 incident in Orange County, where a firefighter sustained irreversible injuries fighting a battery storage facility fire and was forced into early retirement.

To safeguard firefighters' health amid the rapid expansion of lithium-ion battery use, California urgently needs updated PPE and more effective decontamination procedures.

SOLUTION

AB 841 convenes a working group to systematically review and provide recommendations by September 1, 2026 on ways to limit firefighter exposure to the toxic substances present during lithium-ion battery fires. The group will evaluate technologies for cleaning PPE after exposure, determine if different types of PPEs are required for varying scales of lithium-ion battery fires, and assess current decontamination practices to effectively reduce health risks.

FOR MORE INFORMATION

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SUPPORT

California Professional Firefighters (Sponsor)

OPPOSITION

None