

Safety Alert

From: Lou DiBerardinis, Director Environment Health and Safety

Date: August, 2009

Re: **Safety Alert** for Shipping Lithium Metal and Lithium Ion Batteries by Themselves, With Equipment, or Contained in Equipment

This alert is being sent to raise awareness across campus that there are special requirements for shipping Lithium Metal or Lithium Ion (Li-ion) batteries (which includes Lithium-polymer or LiPo batteries) either by themselves, packed with equipment, or as part of equipment containing them. There have been a number of incidents involving these batteries across the country, including a recent incident involving a package shipped from MIT. The regulations and guidance for how to safely ship these batteries have been updated recently by the International Air Transport Association (IATA) and the Department of Transportation (DOT).

Lithium Metal batteries are generally non-rechargeable and may be used to power watches, cameras, and calculators. Lithium Ion batteries are rechargeable and are found in consumer electronics such as mobile telephones and lap tops. Researchers and students at MIT may be using these batteries as part of prototype electronic equipment for various applications.

Under current law, these batteries cannot be shipped from MIT packed by themselves, packed with equipment, or contained in equipment without proper packaging and labeling. The packaging and labeling requirements will depend on a number of factors including size of batteries and quantity of items in the shipment. The Environment Health and Safety Office can provide guidance for how to ship them correctly and can assist with packaging them, as needed. Please contact EHS at 617-452-3477 to assure all shipments of these batteries or equipment containing these batteries from MIT are managed properly.

The Environment Health and Safety Office has trained staff to assist with packaging, labeling, and preparing appropriate documents for all shipments of "Dangerous Goods" in accordance with regulatory requirements. Dangerous Goods, also referred to as Hazardous Materials, may include chemicals (solids, liquids, or gas), items that contain chemicals, viable biological agents and tissues that contain them, radioisotopes, and other items such as systems under pressure, that can harm people, other animals, property, and the environment. If you have questions or concerns or need assistance with a shipment, contact the EHS Office at 617-452-3477 / environment@mit.edu.

For more information on requirements for shipping chemicals or items that contain chemicals, there is an EHS Standard Operating Procedure you can refer to at: https://web.mit.edu/environment/pdf/sop/sop_0065.pdf .