

25 September 2023

E-mobility devices on UQ Sites

Background

E-mobility devices have gained popularity among UQ students and staff, providing a convenient, affordable and environmentally sound mode of transportation. However, their charging and storage within buildings poses potential health and safety risks that need to be addressed.

E-mobility devices may include e-scooters, e-bikes, e-skateboards and self-balancing 1 or 2-wheelers. Any mobility device used for the primary purpose of aiding mobility is excluded (e.g., powered wheelchairs).

Hazards linked to e-mobility

As adoption of privately owned e-mobility devices continues to grow, so does the risk exposure associated with their charging and storage. The Electrical Safety Office (ESO) issued a consumer warning in February 2023 following a recent spike in news reports about the safety of electric scooters in Queensland.

Charging and storing e-mobility devices inside occupied buildings can lead to various health and safety concerns, including fire hazards, electric shock, reduced air quality and space constraints including possible obstruction of emergency evacuation paths, and potential damage to property.

Figure 1



Figure 2



Figure 1. A charging e-scooter caused a small explosion inside a high-rise building when the lithium-ion battery failed. (Supplied: QFES)

Figure 2. A battery powering an e-bike sparked a fire damaging a Perth home (Source: ABC News)

Requirements

- Charging e-mobility devices or their batteries on UQ sites is not permitted.
- E-mobility devices must only be secured outside buildings, in existing Bike Racks, Bike Boxes or Bike Storage Rooms. Locations are indicated on [UQ Maps](#).
- Ride share e-mobility devices (e.g., Beam, Neuron, Lime) must be parked away from pedestrian thoroughfares.

Recommendations

- If using e-mobility devices, ensure you use high quality locking systems to deter theft.
- When purchasing an e-mobility device, consider the battery capacity to ensure it can cover your journey to and from UQ without the need for charging.

- If purchasing an e-mobility device check that the device and charger have the regulatory compliance mark (RCM). This means it meets Australian safety standards.

Reporting

- Staff and Students are encouraged to report incidents to their supervisor or Work Health and Safety Manager/Coordinator and through UQSafe.

Resources

- <https://campuses.uq.edu.au/cycling/parking-facilities>
- <https://campuses.uq.edu.au/files/19492/St-lucia-cycling-map-2021.pdf>
- The below links provide information on the fire\explosion risks of e-mobility devices and controls to reduce those risks.

<https://www.electricalsafety.qld.gov.au/electrical-equipment/using-and-charging-electric-scooters>

<https://www.qfes.qld.gov.au/safety-education/battery-and-charging-safety/lithium-ion-batteries-and-power-devices>

Additional Information

For further information, contact your local Work Health and Safety Manager/Coordinator or the UQ HSW-Division, phone: +61 7 336-52365 or email hsw@uq.edu.au. Current Hazard alerts are available at <https://staff.uq.edu.au/information-and-services/health-safety-wellbeing/health-safety-workplace/governance/communications>.