



Roll Call Training Bulletin

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Thermal Runaway in Electrical Vehicles

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BACKGROUND

Recent vehicle fires involving electric vehicles (EVs) have prompted a heightened awareness regarding thermal runaway in EVs. The purpose of this bulletin is to assist officers in responding to calls for service (e.g., traffic collisions or vehicle fires) where an EV is exhibiting signs of thermal runaway.

What Is Thermal Runaway?

Lithium-ion batteries in EVs are comprised of hundreds of small cells. When these cells overheat, they can individually explode, releasing intense heat and toxic gases, which can be very harmful. These thermal runaway events can lead to spontaneous fires and battery reignition, even after the initial fire has been extinguished.



What Should Officers Do When Encountering Thermal Runaway?

- Use caution if it sounds like “fireworks” are going off in an EV.
- Immediately request the fire department respond and advise them if a lithium-ion battery or EV is involved.
- The recommended distance for evacuation and isolation during an EV fire is 330 feet. Employees responding to an EV fire should seek voluntary evacuations within that 330 foot isolation distance.
- Consider the use of city crews to implement hard closures with barricades or cones until the scene is deemed safe.

**For more information, please watch a short video by
Selecting the link below**

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=M9CI6_Y2rXU