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## Suncorp warns of rising lithium-ion battery fire risk as Black Friday approaches

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As Black Friday sales heat up, new data reveals lithium-ion battery fires across Queensland are on the rise with Suncorp warning shoppers to be alert and prioritise safety when purchasing these devices.

According to the Queensland Fire Department, there has been 325 lithium-ion battery related fires in Queensland in the past two years, with 167 occurring since 1 January this year. Suncorp has observed a similar trend, with a concerning increase in more severe fire claims linked to lithium-ion batteries.

“While Black Friday offers great discounts and the chance to get a head start on holiday shopping, it’s crucial to check the safety warnings and quality when buying products with lithium-ion batteries,” Suncorp Executive General Manager Home Claims Customers, Alli Smith said.

“These devices, while generally safe, can pose significant fire risks if not handled and stored correctly. We have seen faulty devices both starting fires, but also accelerating fires. These high heat, rapidly spreading fires risk lives of individuals and emergency services, as well as causing significant damage.”

Queensland Fire Department Superintendent Mark Halverson advised shoppers to only purchase lithium-ion battery powered devices from reputable retailers.

“If buying a personal mobility device, such as an e-scooter, check that the scooter and the supplied battery charger have the Regulatory Compliance Mark, which identifies that it meets Australian safety standards,” Superintendent Halverson said.

“Second hand devices, especially if purchased online from an unknown source, pose an increased risk of fire, as the quality and history of the product is unknown.

“Never tamper with a battery or attempt to modify the energy storage capacity of a lithium-ion battery pack, as this greatly heightens the risk of fire and/or explosion.”

Suncorp’s Ms Smith said severe fire claims exceeding \$500,000 were rising, largely due to the increasing popularity of lithium-ion battery products.

“As we’ve seen in fire claims over the past year, these batteries can catastrophically fail, leading to explosive fires that can engulf a home in minutes,” she said. “This level of destruction often results in total loss claims from an insurance perspective, with multiple claims exceeding \$500,000.”

Ms Smith added shoppers can take steps when considering the purchase of lithium-ion battery products.

“Do your research, check the integrity of the brands, check for safety certifications, and understand proper usage, storage and charging guidelines,” she said.

“We encourage homeowners to review their insurance policies, understand coverage details, and prioritise safety measures to prevent incidents before they occur.”

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