

ESA to launch battery recycling campaign in bid to reduce waste fires

LONDON, 19 August 2020

The Environmental Services Association (ESA) has today revealed early details of a new national communications campaign urging consumers to *Recycle Batteries Responsibly*, in a bid to reduce the number of serious fires caused by batteries which have been carelessly discarded.

The *Take Charge* campaign was commissioned by the ESA on behalf of its members, who report that certain high-energy rechargeable batteries are responsible for a significant percentage of the fires that occur in recycling and waste management facilities or vehicles.

The ESA's cross-industry Battery Fires Task Group, which includes Fire & Rescue Service representatives, is working to address the issue of battery-related waste fires. Through this group, over the last three years, the ESA has collected annual data from its members showing that lithium-ion (Li-ion) batteries alone are consistently responsible for around 25% of all fires at waste management facilities. ESA member data for the 2019/2020 financial year is currently being compiled and will be released alongside the launch of the *Take Charge* campaign later this year.

The *Take Charge* campaign will feature a memorable creative concept which depicts dead batteries rising from the grave as "zombies" to terrorise recycling and waste management facilities. The campaign will urge consumers to "*join the fight*" against zombie batteries by *Recycling Batteries Responsibly*.

In addition to encouraging consumers to use battery recycling infrastructure, the campaign aims to raise awareness of the wide range of consumer electronic devices that contain high-energy rechargeable batteries and to help people understand how to recycle products containing batteries which cannot easily be removed for separate recycling.

Upon its launch, the campaign will include a dedicated website and its own social media presence. It will also include a short film, showing how batteries can become "zombies" if not recycled responsibly, as well as a range of communications assets for public and private sector organisations to use and share free of charge.

The ESA intends to contact local authorities and other organisations involved in battery recycling, to seek feedback on the campaign and to help further develop the communications materials, prior to an official launch of the campaign later this year.

Executive Director of the Environmental Services Association (ESA), Jacob Hayler said: *“Our society is seeing an exponential increase in the use of high-energy rechargeable batteries across a wide range of consumer electronic devices, so we expect the number and frequency of battery-related waste fires to increase in future unless we can encourage consumers to use proper battery recycling infrastructure more often. Waste fires not only cause millions of pounds of damage every year and disrupt services but, more importantly, can put lives at risk, so this is clearly a serious issue facing the recycling and waste management sector.*

We hope that the Take Charge campaign, through its memorable theme, will provide fresh impetus to this important issue and help to raise awareness among consumers of the dangers posed when batteries enter the residual waste or conventional recycling streams.

We are working to launch this campaign later this year and, in the meantime, would very much welcome support from any organisation that shares our commitment to tackling battery-related waste fires, by ensuring that more and more batteries are recycled responsibly.”

Any interested organisations are invited to contact the ESA to find out more about supporting the *Take Charge* campaign. An early creative concept is included below:



Notes to editors

Please feel free to use the attached image as necessary for editorial purposes

For media enquiries, please contact Ben Johnson on 020 7591 3214 or via email to b-johnson@esauk.org