

Safety Corner

Safety precautions when using rechargeable USB power banks

Rechargeable USB power banks, also known as battery packs, have become our must-have accessory because they can recharge our power-hungry smartphones and mobile devices when we are away from an electricity outlet. As with all electrical and electronic devices, we must treat power banks with care to ensure safety. Although there are usually levels of protection against overcharge and short-circuit built into power banks using lithium-ion batteries, news on power banks catch in fire or exploding can be heard almost weekly. Here are some general dos and don'ts to help you use your power banks safely.

- Do keep away from heat sources and liquids - direct sunlight, humidity, or water.
- Do only use connecting cables provided with the power bank or your mobile device.
- Do get power banks from reputable manufacturers.
- Do stay away from flammables.
- Do discard faulty ones immediately in a safe manner.
- Don't expose to extreme temperatures. For example, do not leave it in a parked car where it could get very cold in winter or very hot in summer.
- Don't leave on prolonged charge when not in use.
- Don't store where they may short-circuit through conductive material - such as in your pocket or bag with coins or keys.
- Don't drop or handle roughly. They are robust but not indestructible.
- Don't cover when charging to allow heat dissipation. Charge in a well-ventilated environment.
- Don't charge unattended, overnight, or without anyone nearby for a prolonged period.
- Don't dismantle or attempt to repair faulty one.
- Don't charge or use in series. Use each individually.
- In the event of a cell leaking, don't allow the liquid to come into contact with the skin or eyes. If there has been contact, wash the affected area with water and seek medical advice.

The above safety advice applies to both smartphones and rechargeable batteries.

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