Science Olympiad Battery Policy
Revised September 2, 2026

In an effort to ensure that all participants involved in Science Olympiad have a safe, positive experience we have been examining the role that batteries, specifically lithium-containing batteries, play in our events. These batteries provide certain advantages; however, we would be remiss if we did not also acknowledge the engineering, safety, and cost challenges that go hand in hand with them. While delivering high levels of electrical energy, lithium-containing batteries also generate high levels of heat, especially if a short circuit occurs. Furthermore, their chemical composition is susceptible to fire if the battery is damaged, poorly designed, or incorrectly assembled. After a review of incidents from a number of tournaments as well as an examination of available information, we have decided to prohibit the use of lithium-batteries in all participant-built devices at all Science Olympiad Tournaments. **When allowed by the specific event rules, batteries such as NiCad and NiMH batteries, which may contain small amounts of lithium, are still permitted for use.**

This restriction does not solve every battery safety issue that can occur during competition. All Science Olympiad participants, coaches, and mentors are reminded that serious accidents can occur when care is not taken using any battery. As you work with batteries this year please make sure to follow these best practice guidelines:

- When storing your device make sure to disconnect the battery;
- Insulate the battery terminals and attached wires when not connected;
- Do not use bare wire at any time in the construction of your device;
- Make sure that all wiring connections are properly insulated; and,
- Monitor recharging of batteries to ensure they are not being overcharged.

As we continue to develop our knowledge of these batteries, as individuals and as an organization, we will reexamine the restriction on the use of lithium-containing batteries. If you have questions, use the contact Science Olympiad form on our website.

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