



Setting Standards for Excellence

The Association of Electrical and Medical
Imaging Equipment Manufacturers
www.nema.org

Questions Regarding Ingestion of Button Cell Batteries

- Q. What is the battery industry doing to address incidents involving ingestion of small batteries?
- A. There are four activities that manufacturers have undertaken to address ingestion of batteries.
1. For over twenty years battery manufacturers have provided financial support on a yearly basis to the National Capitol Poison Control Center in Washington DC. This funding helps the NCPCC conduct research, engage in education and outreach, and maintain a “Battery Hotline” that provides emergency assistance for ingestion cases worldwide.
 2. Placing warning notices on batteries of ingestible size (*i.e.*, triple AAA and smaller), as per ANSI C18.1M, Part 2 and C18.3M, Part 2) to alert consumers to ingestion hazard and provide NCPCC hotline number.
 3. Participating in standards development process for battery-powered toys, with focus on making access to batteries harder for children, such as ensuring they are protected by screw-in plate.
 4. Ongoing participation in efforts by the American National Standards Institute, the International Electrotechnical Commission, and other standard setting organizations to improve battery construction and safety. (Note – the US Consumer Product Safety Commission is also a participant)
- Q. Some button cell batteries (20mm and larger) are larger than others, and when ingested the larger batteries may pose a greater risk because they are more difficult to remove from the body in a timely way. Has the industry given any consideration to eliminating these larger size batteries?
- A. The larger size batteries (20mm and larger) have tremendous utility in certain applications such as medical products and automotive key fobs and some remote control devices, so it would not make sense to eliminate this size battery from the marketplace.

Q. There have been reports that children are ingesting the larger size batteries and they are getting them from toys. Is the industry doing anything from keeping these batteries out of toys?

A. It is unusual for a toy to utilize a battery of that size (20mm or larger), and we normally don't expect to see them used in toys. Our recommendation to the toy manufacturers who find it necessary to use that size battery in their product is to incorporate designs that make it difficult for children to gain access, such as securing the battery compartment enclosure with a screw that can only be opened with a tool.

Q. How pervasive is battery ingestion?

A. It is not pervasive, but it happens in extremely rare instances in all age groups.

Q. What are the critical first steps to seek help when someone has ingested a battery?

A. Getting medical attention at a hospital emergency room and contacting the National Poison Control Center if necessary. In many cases, there is not a witness to a battery ingestion and it may not be known by the person who ingested the battery that that is what happened. We are aware of persons who have mistaken small batteries for pills, and then children may not be able to communicate what happened.