

Victorian Neighbourhood Battery Safety Guideline

Consultation report

Energy Safe Victoria consulted on a draft *Victorian Neighbourhood Battery Safety Guideline* from 12 March to 6 May 2024.

Engagement summary

Energy Safe emailed stakeholders from the following sectors to advise about the consultation:

- government
- electricity distribution
- community energy
- other stakeholders.

The draft guideline was mentioned at two webinars run by Yarra Energy Foundation.

The consultation period generated:

- **417** web page views
- **193** downloads of the draft guideline
- **5** written submissions.

Themes of submissions

Several key themes emerged from the submissions:

- **Focus on lithium-ion battery technology.** Stakeholders highlighted the need to consider the diverse range of battery technologies available.
- **Need for risk assessment examples.** Suggestions to include examples of risk assessments and studies referenced throughout the document.
- **Clarity on additional regulatory requirements.** Lack of clarity about regulatory requirements outside of Energy Safe's remit.

Our response to submissions

Significant effort was made to incorporate all suggestions received during the consultation period. Valuable insights enhanced the clarity, relevance and applicability of the guideline. The document was also revised for reading accessibility.

However, some suggestions were not incorporated. This was either because they fell outside scope or conflicted with the guideline's objectives. The suggestions that were not incorporated are:

- Several submissions suggested we provide templates and tools to assess safety risks. While we recognise the value in this suggestion, we decided to maintain the current approach. While there are common risks across projects, each project also presents unique risks. The objective of this guideline is to outline legal requirements and key considerations.
- We decided to exclude regulatory requirements that fall outside of Energy Safe's remit. We are not able to provide guidance on the requirements of other regulatory bodies.

- Some submissions suggested that Energy Safe remove references to considerations in the guideline. For example, modelling and studies that can be undertaken. We decided to clarify that these are considerations rather than removing them. Each project is unique. Not all considerations mentioned in the guideline will be relevant. It is the responsibility of the project owner to determine the applicable scope.

Summary of changes from draft to final guideline

The following outlines the changes made to each section of the guideline:

About this guideline:

- No substantial changes.

Who is this guideline for:

- Provided greater clarity around the definition of who may be considered an owner.

Summary:

- Updated the definition of a neighbourhood battery
- Removed the term 'common' from factors that can contribute to failure
- Added 'installation in inappropriate locations' as a factor.

Legal requirements:

- Clarified that this section specifically applies to neighbourhood batteries.
- Added a link to the electrical equipment section on our website.

Safe design:

- No substantial changes.

Equipment and component selection:

- Removed reference to international standards.
- Removed the link to the Battery Safety Guide. It is already included in the "Further Information" section.

Location of installation:

- Added to the list of factors that should be considered
- Revised the statement about building near overhead powerlines
- Clarified the statement regarding Bushfire Management Overlay
- Removed the recommendation to avoid building near roadways.

Battery chemistry:

- Added a new section to address evolving technologies and different battery chemistries.

Enclosure:

- Clarified this section refers to the battery enclosure, not perimeter fencing.

Thermal runaway and fire prevention/detection (renamed to Fire prevention and detection):

- Removed references that were specific to lithium-ion technology
- Added references to Mapshare
- Added distinctions between CFA and FRV
- Added emergency planning and the importance of ongoing consultation with fire authorities
- Removed the reference to water deluge systems.

Battery temperature:

- Removed this section as it was specific to lithium-ion technology.

After fire safety:

- Removed this section as it was specific to lithium-ion technology.

Monitoring and protection:

- Updated the definition to align with AS 5139 standards
- Added further clarification on the different levels of battery management systems
- Removed the statement regarding faults within the battery
- Included a recommendation to consult with the electricity distribution business early.

Maintenance:

- No substantial changes.

Hazards and Risks:

- Updated to incorporate all the recommendations provided in the feedback.

Further Information:

- Added a link to DEECA's neighbourhood battery tool and resources.

References:

- Added a reference to AS 60529.

[Link to final guideline](#)

The *Victorian Neighbourhood Battery Safety Guideline* is available on the Energy Safe website.