

# SAFETY ALERT

September 2018

## Head Torch Battery Packs Exploding

### Overview

During the night shift on the 4<sup>th</sup> September 2018 a Wilkinson Environmental operative, working on behalf of Carnells, on the A5 GAILEY to rising Sun Road works improvement scheme had the battery pack on his head torch explode whilst it was on his safety helmet.

Fortunately, no one was hurt but it could have caused serious injuries to the operative and anyone standing behind him.

Head torches have been issued by Wilkinson Environmental to all their operatives. The Wilkinson Environmental purchasing Dept. misread the CE mark as European Conformity when in fact the CE mark actually meant "Chinese Export" therefore the product did not meet the requirements of the applicable EC directives.



### Risks of defective battery packs

They carry serious risks, including:

- Fire and explosions that can cause property damage, burns, or death
- Harmful chemicals released that cause permanent lung damage

There are usually no signs that something is about to go wrong, except for a possible 'popping' sound just before it explodes.

Thankfully, these incidents are rare – but an explosion is always a risk with these types of batteries.

### Lessons Learnt

All of the supplied Head torches issued by Wilkinson Environmental will be withdrawn and replaced.

Whilst waiting for replacement head torches can all operatives please follow the guidelines in the action section.

All future equipment purchases will be vetted by Wilkinson Environmental SHEQ Dept. to confirm that they conform to all applicable standards.

If you have any further queries please contact the Wilkinson Environmental SHEQ Dept.

#### Actions:

Follow these precautions to minimise the risk of danger with head torch batteries:

- Never leave a battery pack charging unattended
- Don't overcharge your battery
- Charge it regularly (don't let it go 'dead' for long periods of time)
- Charge it inside a battery safety bag
- Don't expose your battery to extremes of temperature (either too hot or too cold)
- Don't mix different batteries together

There's no need to go throwing out your head torch battery just yet. Use with caution and always follow the guidelines!