

Weekly Safety Tip

What is a BESS and What Are the Workplace Risks?







What Is a Battery Energy Storage System and What Are the Workplace Risks?



Traditional batteries are rapidly being replaced by lithium-ion batteries.

While they have long been in place in small forms for consumer electronics like cellphones and laptops, large-scale lithium-ion battery energy storage systems (BESSs) are now powering or backing up equipment like uninterrupted power sources, data centers, hospital imaging systems and more.

Compared to a traditional lead acid or nickel-based batteries, lithium-ion batteries have higher energy density, lower maintenance, higher performance and better longevity.

They are also quite safe; only 1 in 10 million lithium-ion batteries fails, according to the nonprofit <u>Fire Protection Research Foundation</u>.

"But when they go bad, they go *really* bad," says James Trudeau, a 30-year veteran of the energy field and a former marketing manager with UL, Underwriters Laboratory.

When a lithium-ion battery fails, it almost always catches on fire and can lead to explosion, which can cause massive damage, injury and death.

While the risk is alarming, Trudeau offers this advice: "Don't worry about it, just plan for it."

What Is a Battery Energy Storage System?

A battery energy storage system is a type of energy storage system that uses batteries to store and distribute energy as electricity. BESSs are often used to enable energy from renewable sources, like solar and wind, to be stored and released.

Lithium-ion batteries currently dominate storage technology for large-scale systems.

"You're all going to be dealing with this in some way or another," Trudeau says, pointing to the switch to lithium-ion-powered electric vehicles, corporate focus on environmental, social and governance (ESG) standards driving electrification, and the continued trend to replace traditional lead acid batteries with lithium-ion versions.

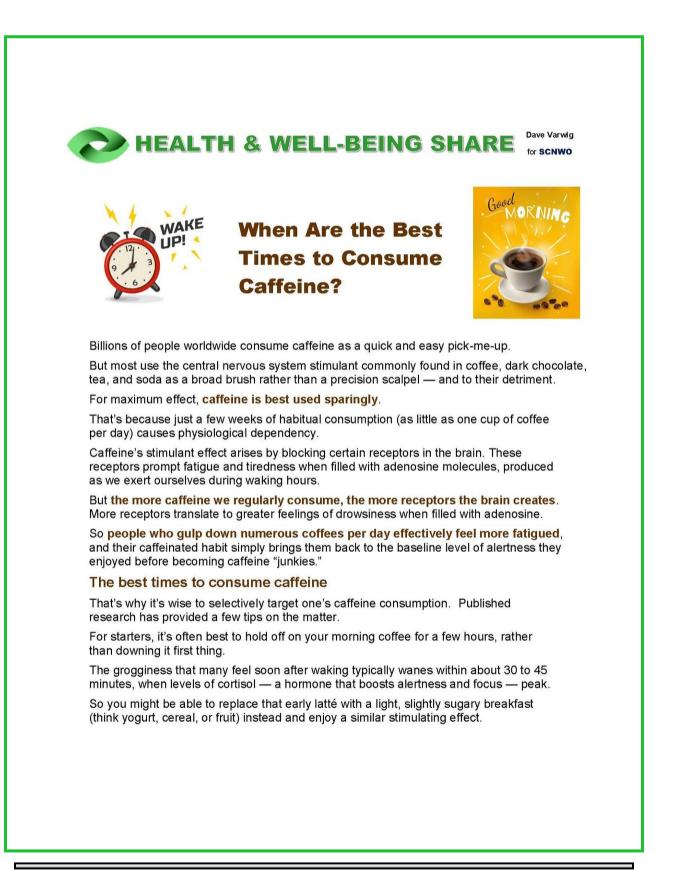
1

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