



Coffee Break Training - Fire Protection Series

Storage Practices: Charging Electric-Powered Industrial Trucks

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Learning Objective: The student will be able to explain safety practices related to recharging Type E electric-powered industrial trucks.

The workhorses of many warehouse, factory and retail facilities, powered industrial trucks are essential for the prompt and safe movement of goods. (See Coffee Break Training 2006-39 for guidance on fire-safe use.) When not in use, the equipment must be recharged or refueled so that it is ready for service.

National Fire Protection Association 505, *Fire Safety Standard for Powered Industrial Trucks Including Type Designations, Areas of Use, Conversions, Maintenance, and Operations* provides the following safety guidelines where Type E truck batteries are changed or charged:

- Only trained and authorized personnel should change or charge batteries.
- Trucks should be positioned properly and brakes should be applied before personnel attempt to change or charge batteries.
- Battery-charging installations should be located in areas designated for such a purpose.
- Precautions should be taken to prevent open flames, sparks or electric arcs in battery-charging areas.
- The areas should be kept free of extraneous combustible materials.
- Smoking should be prohibited in the charging area.
- Tools and other metal objects should be kept away from the tops of uncovered batteries.
- When batteries are being charged, the vent caps should be kept in place to avoid electrolyte spray.
- Care should be taken to ensure that vent caps are functioning.
- The battery or compartment cover(s) should be open to dissipate heat and gas.
- Battery maintenance personnel should wear protective clothing, such as eye protection, long sleeves, and gloves.
- Removal and replacement of batteries should not require the use of protective clothing.

For more information, consider enrolling in the National Fire Academy (NFA) course “Fire Protection for the Built Environment” (R0135). Information and applications can be obtained at <http://apps.usfa.fema.gov/nfacourses/catalog/details/645>. The course is available at the NFA in Emmitsburg, Maryland, or through your state fire service training agency.



This Type E electric-powered industrial truck and the adjacent charging unit should be located and maintained to prevent fires.

