



# SAFETY ALERT

## Forklift Battery Incident

RISK MANAGEMENT & SAFETY

**Date:** July, 2019  
**Category:** Forklift Safety

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### Description

During the transition of forklift maintenance to Morrison Industrial Equipment Co., a forklift was found with a smoking battery. The forklift was perpetually left on the charger and the battery was not properly maintained or inspected. Crystals had formed on top of the battery which began to smoke. Acids that had leaked from the battery corroded the battery container and parts of the forklift, requiring significant cost to repair.

### Findings

- Forklift left on charger continuously
- Water not added to battery consistently
- Adding of water was performed at improper time causing boil-overs to occur
- Battery acids corroded forklift and damaged other battery components
- Crystals formed on battery cells leading to smoke

### Root Causes

- Improper maintenance of forklift battery
- Lack of proper training and knowledge
- Lack of maintenance program



### Actions

- RMS to work with Morrison Industrial Equipment to establish a routine maintenance process to ensure batteries are being properly maintained.
- Morrison to install Level-lite Watering Indicators on powered industrial trucks to ensure that batteries have adequate water levels prior to use.
- Morrison to take over process of adding water to batteries after charging is complete—ND employees no longer need to perform task.
- Provide training to forklift operators on proper battery maintenance and operator refresher training, if necessary.

All safety communications can be found at <https://riskmanagement.nd.edu/communication/>.

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