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2015 International Fire Code®

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SECTION 608

STATIONARY STORAGE BATTERY SYSTEMS

608.1 Scope. Stationary storage battery systems having an electrolyte capacity of more than 50 gallons (189 L) for flooded lead-acid, nickel cadmium (Ni-Cd) and valve-regulated lead-acid (VRLA), or more than 1,000 pounds (454 kg) for lithium-ion and lithium metal polymer, used for facility standby power, emergency power or uninterruptible power supplies shall comply with this section and Table 608.1.

608.2 Safety caps. Safety caps for stationary storage battery systems shall comply with Sections 608.2.1 and 608.2.2.

608.2.1 Nonrecombinant batteries. Vented lead-acid, nickel-cadmium or other types of

nonrecombinant batteries shall be provided with safety venting caps.

608.2.2 Recombinant batteries. VRLA batteries shall be equipped with self-resealing flame-arresting safety vents.

608.3 Thermal runaway. VRLA and lithium metal polymer battery systems shall be provided with a listed device or other approved method to preclude, detect and control thermal runaway.

608.4 Room design and construction. Enclosure of stationary battery systems shall comply with the International Building Code. Battery systems shall be allowed to be in the same room with the equipment they support.

608.4.1 Separate rooms. Where stationary batteries are installed in a separate equipment room accessible only to

authorized personnel, they shall be permitted to be installed on an open rack for ease of maintenance.

608.4.2 Occupied work centers. Where a system of VRLA, lithium-ion, or other type of sealed, nonventing batteries is situated in an occupied work center, it shall be allowed to be housed in a noncombustible cabinet or other enclosure to prevent access by unauthorized personnel.

608.4.3 Cabinets. Where stationary batteries are contained in cabinets in occupied work centers, the cabinet enclosures shall be located within 10 feet (3048 mm) of the equipment that they support.

608.5 Spill control and neutralization. An approved method and materials for the control and neutralization of a



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spill of electrolyte shall be provided in areas containing leadacid, nickel-cadmium or other types of batteries with freeflowing liquid electrolyte. For purposes of this paragraph, a “spill” is defined as any unintentional release of electrolyte.

Exception: VRLA, lithium-ion, lithium metal polymer or other types of sealed batteries with immobilized electrolyte shall not require spill control.

608.5.1 Nonrecombinant battery neutralization. For battery systems containing lead acid, nickel cadmium or other

types of batteries with free-flowing electrolyte, the method and materials shall be capable of neutralizing a spill of the total capacity from the largest cell or block to a pH between 5.0 and 9.0.

**TABLE 608.1
BATTERY REQUIREMENTS**

REQUIREMENT	NONRECOMBINANT BATTERIES		RECOMBINANT BATTERIES		OTHER BATTERIES
	Vented (Flooded) Lead Acid Batteries	Vented (Flooded) Nickel-Cadmium (Ni-Cd) Batteries	Valve Regulated Lead-Acid (VRLA) Cells	Lithium-Ion Cells	Lithium Metal Cells
Safety caps	Venting caps (608.2.1)	Venting caps (608.2.1)	Self-sealing flame-arresting caps (608.2.2)	No caps	No caps
Thermal runaway management	Not required	Not required	Required (608.3)	Not required	Required (608.3)
Spill control	Required (608.5)	Required (608.5)	Not required	Not required	Not required
Neutralization	Required (608.5.1)	Required (608.5.1)	Required (608.5.2)	Not required	Not required
Ventilation	Required (608.6.1; 608.6.2)	Required (608.6.1; 608.6.2)	Required (608.6.1; 608.6.2)	Not required	Not required
Signage	Required (608.7)	Required (608.7)	Required (608.7)	Required (608.7)	Required (608.7)
Seismic protection	Required (608.8)	Required (608.8)	Required (608.8)	Required (608.8)	Required (608.8)
Smoke detection	Required (608.9)	Required (608.9)	Required (608.9)	Required (608.9)	Required (608.9)



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608.5.2 Recombinant battery neutralization. For VRLA or other types of batteries with immobilized electrolyte, the method and material shall be capable of neutralizing a spill of 3.0 percent of the capacity of the largest cell or block in the room to a pH between 5.0 and 9.0.

Exception: Lithium-ion and lithium metal polymer batteries shall not require neutralization.

608.6 Ventilation. Ventilation of stationary storage battery systems shall comply with Sections 608.6.1 and 608.6.2.

608.6.1 Room ventilation. Ventilation shall be provided in accordance with the International Mechanical Code and the following:

1. For flooded lead-acid, flooded Ni-Cd and VRLA batteries, the ventilation

system shall be designed to limit the maximum concentration of hydrogen to 1.0 percent of the total volume of the room; or

2. Continuous ventilation shall be provided at a rate of not less than 1 cubic foot per minute per square foot (1ft³/min/ft²) [0.0051 m³/s · m²] of floor area of the room.

Exception: Lithium-ion and lithium metal polymer batteries shall not require additional ventilation beyond that which would normally be required for human occupancy of the space in accordance with the International Mechanical Code.

608.6.2 Cabinet ventilation. Where VRLA batteries are installed inside a cabinet, the cabinet shall be approved for use in occupied spaces and shall be mechanically or naturally vented by one of the following methods:

1. The cabinet ventilation shall limit the maximum concentration of hydrogen to 1 percent of the total volume of the cabinet during the worst-case event of simultaneous “boost” charging of all the batteries in the cabinet.

2. Where calculations are not available to substantiate the ventilation rate, continuous ventilation shall be provided at a rate of not less than 1 cubic foot per minute per square foot [1 ft³/min/ft² or 0.0051 m³/(s · m²)] of floor area covered by the cabinet. The room in which the cabinet is installed shall be ventilated as required in Section 608.6.1.

608.6.3 Supervision. Mechanical ventilation systems where required by Sections 608.6.1 and 608.6.2 shall be supervised by an approved



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central, proprietary or remote station service or shall initiate an audible and visual signal at a constantly attended on-site location.

608.7 Signage. Signs shall comply with Sections 608.7.1 and 608.7.2.

608.7.1 Equipment room and building signage. Doors into electrical equipment rooms or buildings containing signs. The signs shall state that:

1. The room contains energized battery systems.
2. The room contains energized electrical circuits.

3. The battery electrolyte solutions, where present, are corrosive liquids.

608.7.2 Cabinet signage. Cabinets shall have exterior labels that identify the manufacturer and model number of the system and electrical rating (voltage and current) of the contained battery system. There shall be signs within the cabinet that indicate the relevant electrical, chemical and fire hazards.

608.8 Seismic protection. The battery systems shall be seismically braced in accordance with the International Building Code.

608.9 Smoke detection. An approved automatic smoke detection system shall be installed in accordance with Section 907.2 in rooms containing stationary battery systems.

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SECTION 609

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The International Code Council, a membership association dedicated to building safety and fire prevention, develops the codes used to construct residential and commercial buildings, including homes and schools. Most U.S. cities, counties and states that adopt codes choose the International Codes developed by the International Code Council.



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