



THE CITY OF NEW YORK

MANHATTAN COMMUNITY BOARD 7

250 West 87th Street, New York, NY 10024 • Phone (212) 362-4008
Website: <https://nyc.gov/mcb7> • E-mail: mn07@cb.nyc.gov

March 10, 2023

Honorable Eric Adams
Mayor
City Hall
New York, NY 10007

Re: Increasing the Safety and Oversight of Motorized Mobility Devices and their Lithium-Ion Batteries

Dear Mayor Adams,

On behalf of Community Board 7/Manhattan (MCB7) and our Upper West Side community, we write in support of the slate of New York City Council bills which would increase the oversight and safety regulations in place regarding the lithium-ion batteries used to power the mobility devices like e-bikes and e-scooters.

Since the New York City Council legalized them nearly 3 years ago, these types of battery-powered vehicles have proliferated, but storing and charging these vehicles carries with it rare but serious risks, especially if the batteries used to run them are improperly charged, damaged, or of lower quality to begin with.

The risks posed by e-bike and e-scooter batteries have grown in tandem with the popularity of these types of vehicles. According to the FDNY, lithium-ion battery explosions are now the 3rd leading cause of fires in NYC¹, with 216 fires, 147 injuries, and 6 deaths last year alone. In just the first two months of this year alone, FDNY says there have been 30 fires, 40 injuries, and 2 deaths linked to e-bike/e-scooter lithium-ion batteries.²

¹ <https://abc7ny.com/battery-fire-nyc-fdny-ritchie-torres/12925171/#:~:text=Lithium%2Dion%20battery%20explosions%20are,inured%20while%20two%20have%20died.>

² <https://www.nytimes.com/2023/03/06/realestate/e-bikes-fires-danger.html>

³

<https://www.bing.com/search?q=fdny+commercial+fires&cc=US&setlang=en&PC=SWG01&form=SPIT01&scope=web>

These incidents demonstrate the risks that lithium-ion batteries for motorized devices pose – not just to the residence or immediate area in which they are charging, but to the entire building, surrounding apartments and commercial ³ businesses.

In response, the New York City Council recently passed bills related to powered mobility devices and lithium battery safety:

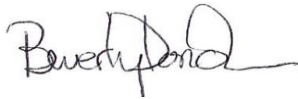
- Council Member Gale Brewer, who represents much of MCB7's district, introduced two bills:
 - NYC Council Bill INT 0656-2022, requiring the FDNY to develop an informational campaign to educate the public on the fire risks posed by powered mobility devices and safety measures that mitigate such risks.
 - NYC Council Bill INT 0752-2022, prohibiting the sale of second-use lithium-ion batteries that have been assembled or reconditioned using cells removed from used batteries.
- Council Member Oswald Feliz has introduced NYC Council Bill INT 663-A, restricting the sale, lease, or rental of vehicles such as e-bikes and e-scooters, and storage batteries for those devices that fail to meet recognized safety standard certification. E-vehicles and their storage batteries would be required to have been certified as meeting the applicable Underwriters Laboratories (UL) safety standards by an accredited testing laboratory, and the testing laboratory logo or name would be required to be displayed on the product packaging or documentation, or on the vehicle or battery itself, to aid in enforcement.
- Council Member Robert Holden has introduced INT 0722-2022, requiring the FDNY to report on safety measures to mitigate fire risk associated with powered mobility devices.
- NY Congressman Richie Torres introduced a new US Congressional bill which would mandate federal safety standards for lithium-ion batteries.

Community Board 7/Manhattan has also taken a position on the issue of e-bike safety, including one resolution calling on the NYC DOT to study the feasibility of enacting additional security measures, and a second resolution calling for all e-bikes to be registered in order to aid with identification in the event of an accident. We attach these resolutions here for your easy reference.

This Board believes it is urgent to sign into law the slate of City Council bills meant to increase oversight of – and the general safety related to – motorized mobility devices and the lithium-ion batteries on which they run.

In addition, Community Board 7/Manhattan reiterates our call for a citywide registration system for these types of battery-powered vehicles to facilitate transparency and effective oversight. Such a system would improve the safety of all New York City residents by enabling building managers; as well as landlords to identify and monitor the number of registered vehicles at their location and address any unregistered vehicles in an appropriate fashion.

Respectfully submitted,



Beverly Donohue
Chair, Community Board 7/Manhattan



William Ortiz
Co-Chair, Community Board 7/Manhattan Public Safety Committee



Polly Spain
Co-Chair, Community Board 7/Manhattan Public Safety Committee

Enclosure: CB7/Manhattan Transportation Committee Resolution, 9/9/21
 CB7/Manhattan Transportation Committee Resolution, 12/12/21

Cc:

Hon. Mark Levine, Manhattan Borough President
Hon. Adrienne Adams, Speaker, NY City Council
Hon. Gale A. Brewer, NY City Council, 6th District
Hon. Shaun Abreu, NY City Council, 7th District
Hon. Oswald Felix, NY City Council, 15th District
Hon. Robert F. Holden, NY City Council, 30th District
Hon. Linda Rosenthal, New York State Assembly, 67th District
Hon. Tony Simone, New York State Assembly, 75th District
Hon. Daniel O'Donnell, New York State Assembly, 69th District
Hon. Cordell Cleare, New York State Senate, 30th District
Hon. Robert Jackson, New York State Senate, 31st District
Hon. Brad Hoylman, New York State Senate, 47th District
Hon. Richie Torres, U.S. Congress, New York State, 15th District