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FIRE RISK BATTERY ! HOW TO SECURE OUR RECYCLING PLANTS

The risk of fire in waste treatment plants has increased massively in the last years. Especially in countries with high level of waste management who are pre-treating waste by sorting and mechanical treatment for recycling, fires in the plants are commonplace. In Austria and Germany there are already dozens of completely destroyed sorting and recycling plants.

The main cause of these fires is due to the increase in lithium-Ion batteries in our mixed waste. More and more products are being equipped with these batteries. On the one hand we can see high growth rates of new batteries, on the other hand more recycling leads to more mechanical damage and increasing fire risk. Unfortunately, even established separate collection systems only collect around half of the batteries. The rest is found in our mixed waste and can become dangerous ignition sources if mechanically treated and damaged.

Current research results analyze the causes and show problem-solving strategies. Countries that are currently on the way to replacing landfills with pretreatment and recycling should prepare for these challenges and take measures in a timely manner.