

Background

- Button batteries are used in many products including remote controls, watches, computers, cameras, calculators, torches, flameless candles, fitness devices, digital kitchen and bathroom scales, musical greeting cards and home medical devices.
- Many children's toys and equipment are powered by button batteries such as plush toys, toy cars, digital pets, early learning watches, light-up yo-yos, games, and novelty items such as light-up children's clothing and shoes.
- If swallowed, a button battery can become stuck in a child's throat and result in catastrophic injuries and even death. Insertion of button batteries into body orifices such as ears and noses can also lead to significant injuries. When swallowed, an electrical current is immediately triggered by saliva, which causes a chemical reaction that can cause severe burns to the child's oesophagus and internal organs such as vital arteries, lungs, heart, larynx, and spine. Serious injury can occur in as little as two hours.
- In Australia, approximately 20 children per week present to hospital after a button battery exposure, with approximately one child every 3 weeks sustaining a severe injury.
- Children can access button batteries in a variety of ways, including:
 - battery compartments that are not secure
 - battery packaging that is not child resistant
 - poor quality products which release button batteries when dropped or broken
 - spare batteries being provided loose in product packaging
 - spare batteries not being kept out of reach around the home
 - used batteries not being properly disposed of.



Button Battery Restrictions

Category	Items powered by button batteries	Restriction
1.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • children's toys, learning equipment/resources • craft materials • flameless candles • tracking tiles/tags • torches • decorations e.g., fairy lights, Christmas ornaments • calculators • thermometers including food thermometers • cameras • timers • digital scales • clocks • children's watches • novelty items e.g., flashing books, jewellery, hair clips/bands, clothing, shoes, bags, greeting cards 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Not permitted to enter the centre • Cannot be used under any circumstances • Immediately removed from the centre • No exceptions

Category	Items powered by button batteries	Restriction	Required risk mitigation strategies
2.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • car keys • glucometers • remote controls for whiteboards, TV, air-conditioners, fans, blinds, security gates 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Must remain inaccessible to children at all times 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Battery compartment must meet safety criteria (page 2 of this procedure) • Store in a locked storeroom, cupboard, drawer or filing cabinet when not in use • Keep a record of items powered by button batteries and location of spare button batteries via <i>Chemical Register</i> • Label item - "Keep out of reach of children" • Complete <i>Risk Assessment Plan</i>

Category	Items powered by button batteries	Restriction	Required risk mitigation strategies
3.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> medical devices e.g., hearing aids, insulin pumps, blood glucose monitors watches (adult only) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Must be worn by a person at all times 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Battery compartment must meet safety criteria (page 2 of this procedure) Keep a record of items powered by button batteries and location of spare button batteries via <i>Chemical Register</i> Complete <i>Risk Assessment Plan</i>

Button Battery Compartment Safety Criteria

All items in category 2 and 3 must meet the following battery compartment safety criteria. If item not does not meet this criteria, it cannot be used and must be immediately removed from the centre. The item must:

Either:

- require a screwdriver or tool to open the battery compartment
- are secured with a child-resistant locking mechanism

OR:

- require 2 independent and simultaneous movements to access the batteries. Note, sequential actions like unscrewing a cap does not meet this requirement.

Be Button Battery Aware

C&K employees, affiliated educators and committee members are required to be button battery aware by implementing the following seven actions:

1. Reduce the number products powered by button batteries

- Implement a strict ban on category 1 items (page 1 of this procedure).
- Do not purchase any products powered by button batteries.
- Restrict children and families bringing any item (except for required medical aids) containing button batteries into your centre. Ask families to check their child's bag for hazardous items including button batteries and items powered by button batteries.

2. Know which products have button batteries

- Label category 2 items with "Keep out of reach of children".
- Keep a centre register (via *Chemical Register*) of products powered by button batteries.
- Complete a thorough monthly centre check for unregistered button batteries via the *Indoor and Outdoor Safety Checklist*.

3. Dispose of spent (flat) and unused batteries

- Immediately remove spent/unused batteries from your centre by covering them in sticky tape, placing them in a tied plastic bag and taking them to a local recycling collection location e.g. Local council (council websites often list additional disposal points), Planet Ark, Aldi supermarkets, Battery World.
- Spent or flat batteries remain dangerous.

4. Secure button batteries and products they power

- Battery compartments must meet the safety criteria.
- For category 2 and 3 items, only purchase Duracell button batteries (with a Bittrex* coating) with child-resistant packaging.
- Store category 2 items in a locked storeroom, cupboard, drawer or filing cabinet when not in use.
- Store spare batteries within their original packaging, in a locked storeroom cupboard, drawer or filing cabinet, out of reach of children.

*Please note, Bittrex may not prevent a child from swallowing a battery. Not all children are able to taste Bittrex. Purchasing batteries with a Bittrex coating is one of many mitigating measures outlined in this procedure.

5. Teach children, families and colleagues about the dangers of button batteries

- Complete and document a risk assessment plan for button batteries.
- Incorporate button battery safety concepts within the curriculum.

- Outline the danger of button batteries with families. Provide information e.g. [Kidsafe Button Battery Brochure](#) and [Queensland Health](#).
- Teach children not to touch/handle button batteries and to alert an adult (e.g. parent, relative or educator) when they see one.
- Outline C&K button battery restrictions with families upon and regularly throughout enrolment. Display *Family Button Battery Alert Poster* in a prominent location(s) annually throughout Term/Quarter 1.
- Outline the danger of button batteries and the requirements of this procedure in the *C&K Family* and *Employee Handbooks* and the [C&K Website/policies](#).

6. Recognise the signs and symptoms of button battery ingestion

If a child states they swallowed something, treat it seriously.

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| • gagging or choking - stops once battery is swallowed | • nose bleeds - sometimes this can present as blood vomited through the nose |
| • drooling | • unexplained fever |
| • chest pain (may present as grunting) | • abdominal pain |
| • coughing or noisy breathing | • general discomfort |
| • unexplained vomiting or food refusal | • spitting blood or blood-stained saliva |
| • bleeding from gut—black/red vomit/bowel motions | • bloody discharge from ear or nose or vagina |

7. Respond immediately if you suspect a child has swallowed or inserted a button battery

1. If you suspect a child has swallowed or inserted a button battery – Act quickly! Prompt action is critical. Do not wait for symptoms to develop.
2. If there is breathing difficulty or bleeding immediately call 000.
3. Otherwise, telephone the Poisons Information Centre (13 11 26) for fast expert advice to be directed to the nearest hospital or emergency service that can manage the injury.
4. Do not let child eat or drink.
5. Do not induce vomiting.

Key references and acknowledgements

C&K consulted with Kidsafe Qld in the development of this procedure.

- Kidsafe - <https://kidsafeqld.com.au/button-batteries/>
- Product Safety Australia (ACCC) - <https://www.productsafety.gov.au/product-safety-laws/safety-standards-bans/mandatory-standards/button-and-coin-batteries>
- Product Safety Australia (ACCC) - <https://www.accc.gov.au/media-release/accc-welcomes-safety-and-information-standards-for-button-batteries>
- The Royal Children's Hospital Melbourne - https://www.rch.org.au/kidsinfo/fact_sheets/Safety_Button_batteries/
- Queensland Government - <https://www.qld.gov.au/law/your-rights/consumer-rights-complaints-and-scams/product-safety-for-consumers/safety-advice-and-warnings/around-the-home/button-batteries>
- Queensland Health - <https://www.health.qld.gov.au/news-events/news/button-batteries-danger-young-kids-emergency>