

Why electric vehicle fires are a real pain point for firefighters



There's no single tool that is standard for all firefighters to use while battling EV fires, but there is new technology that could help.

By [Susan Campbell](#)

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PHOENIX (3TV/CBS 5/InvestigateTV) - When a Tesla crashed and burst into flames in Scottsdale, it reignited on the tow truck. On a California highway, it took firefighters three hours and 6,000 gallons of water to stop an Electric Vehicle (EV) from burning. "Electric vehicle fires have become really a pain for us," said Dave Folio of the Scottsdale Fire Department.

EV fires are dangerous, costly, and full of unknowns. "We're still figuring out ways to deal with them; Everything from putting them in a dumpster and loading sand on top of them and possibly even burying them in some cases," Folio said. "Right now, we're all scrambling to come up with a better way."

There's no single tool that is standard for all firefighters to use while battling EV fires, but there is new technology that could help.

In Tempe, firefighters from more than a dozen departments watched a demonstration of some of those tools, including the Turtle Fire System. Buddy Hayes, a fire captain in New Jersey, created it. "The problem with electric vehicles is trying to cool the battery pack," Hayes said. Vehicle manufacturers recommend doing that with a lot of water, but EV batteries are hard to get to, so the Turtle device slides right under the car and sprays water up toward the battery. "We flow over 500 gallons a minute," Hayes said. "Right now, we've sold to quite a few departments. All the major airports in my area, New Jersey, have purchased. Some major departments in New York, Chicago, and Boston."

Firefighters are also testing thermal blankets, which are big enough to cover entire vehicles. "When you look at the blanket, you think, 'Oh, it put the fire out,'" said Bricen Miller of Li-Fire. "It actually can't. It's impossible to stop a lithium-ion battery fire, so the blanket does a great job of isolating and eliminating exposure."

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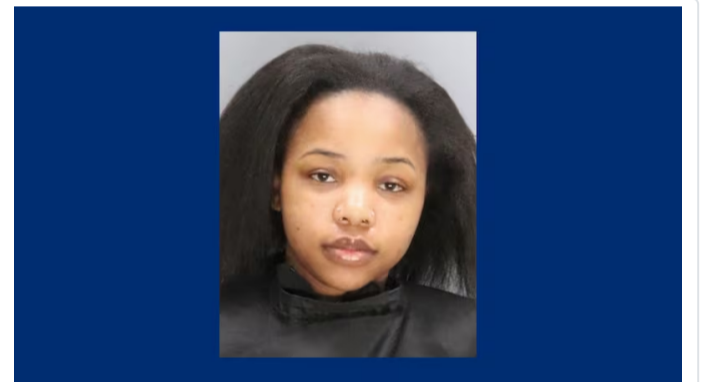


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