

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

- Q Why have I been instructed to remove the batteries?
A To avoid the small potential chance of a fire hazard from leaking batteries. Leakage from the batteries may cause the thermostat circuitry to overheat and potentially turn the thermostat into a fire hazard.
- Q If I remove the batteries, won't the thermostat stop working?
A No. The only function the batteries provide is to keep the clock setting current in the event of a power outage. The clock (day of the week & time of day) will now have to be reset by the resident after any power outage.
- Q Will programmed settings be lost if there is a power outage?
A No. Your program settings are saved on a memory chip. When power is restored, your programmed settings will remain just as they were prior to the interruption of power.
- Q Will removing the batteries affect my electric bill?
A No it will not. The batteries only operate when you have no power coming through your meter and only to maintain the thermostat clock in operation.
- Q Will removing the batteries affect the operation of my air conditioner or heating system?
A No it will not. The thermostat will continue to control your air conditioning (and heating) the same as it did before as long as you have power to your home.
- Q What do I do next after I remove the batteries?
A Replace the door onto the thermostat; dispose of the batteries in accordance with District disposal requirements for alkaline batteries.
- Q When do I put the batteries back in?
A Do not replace the batteries. The thermostat will function normally, except for keeping time during a power outage.

Reinstalling batteries re-creates the potential for a fire hazard condition.

Q If I have additional questions, who should I call?

A Call (202) 331-6131 and explain that you have a PowerCentsDC thermostat and additional questions.

Q What should I do if I was away from home when I received the phone call, letter, and/or email?

A Remove the batteries as soon as possible once you return home.

Q How can I tell if the batteries have leaked or otherwise been damaged?

A Battery leakage is indicated by a sticky, thick liquid oozing from the battery casing, possibly accumulating in the battery compartment.

Q Why am I receiving so many communications regarding the thermostat issue?

A SMPPI wants to use all reasonable means to ensure PowerCentsDC participants are informed about this issue.

Q The kind of battery used -- is it a particularly dangerous battery?

A The battery used is a typical AA size alkaline battery. Common brands of these batteries are Duracell and Energizer, and there are many other makers as well.

The battery itself is not particularly dangerous. The leakage experienced with the thermostat batteries is an infrequent issue with this type of battery. It is sometimes seen with alkaline batteries used in battery-powered appliances, flashlights, and toys.

The batteries only create a fire hazard in the thermostat if they leak and the leaking electrolyte drips onto the circuit board of the thermostat. This has caused documented shorting and overheating of the circuit board in a number of thermostats. If 1) the batteries are removed, 2) the batteries have not leaked, and 3) no batteries are reinstalled, the thermostat no longer presents a fire hazard and will continue to operate safely.