

# Rapid Lesson Sharing

**Event Type:** BKR Radio Battery Clamshell Short

**Date:** August 16, 2025

**Location:** Rock Fire  
Idaho

## Heads-Up on this BKR 5000 Radio Battery Clamshell Issue

On August 15, 2025, on the Rock Fire, the Complex Incident Management Team (CIMT) received their in-brief from the local Type 3 organization and Delegation of Authority and were to assume command of the incident at 0600 the next day.

While the Incident Command Post (ICP) was being set up, resources were beginning the check-in process, including signing out radios from the Communication Unit. The radio kits assigned to the incident contained BKR 5000 radios with AA battery clamshells.

An Emergency Medical Technician-Fireline (EMTF) was provided one radio, one clamshell, and spare batteries. The EMTF was to remain in camp until the next morning to receive their assignment.

The next morning, the EMTF turned on his radio to check the frequencies, but the radio would not turn on. They returned to the communications unit to exchange the radio. When the Communications Tech

opened the battery pack to try replacing the batteries, they noticed that on one side the batteries were placed opposite of their required positioning. This caused the batteries to overheat and leak, melting parts of the internal clamshell and expanding the batteries on the other side. Fortunately, this was noticed prior to going to the line and only the clamshell was damaged.



**Fried Circuit**



**Damaged Batteries**



**Reversed Batteries**



**Melted Magazine**



**Damaged Magazine**

## Lessons

- ❖ Many line-going personnel use the AA clamshell as a primary battery pack or back-up for their rechargeable batteries. Not paying attention to the placement of the batteries will cause the clamshell to fail and potentially leave the user without communications.

- ❖ The BKR 5000 radio is still new to most wildland firefighters and support personnel. Take the time to ask the Communications Unit or others familiar with the radio for a field tutorial.
  - ❖ Pay attention to the diagram inside the battery magazine to ensure that you are placing the batteries in correctly.
  - ❖ Carry or checkout a spare clamshell if you do not have access to rechargeable batteries.
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