

Apple introduces a recall program for some MacBook Pro laptops with faulty batteries

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- The 2015 15-inch Retina MacBook Pro.
Andrew Cunningham
- From top to bottom, MacBook, 13-inch MacBook Air, and 15-inch MacBook Pro. The SD card reader, HDMI port, and one USB 3.0 port are on the right.
Andrew Cunningham
- Power, two Thunderbolt 2 ports, another USB 3.0 port, and a headphone jack are on the left.
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- You can drive a 5K external display at 60Hz by using both Thunderbolt ports at once.
Andrew Cunningham
- The Force Touch trackpad is new, but the keyboard is the same. The only laptop using the new, shallower keyboard is the Retina MacBook.
Andrew Cunningham
- Standard glowing Apple logo in a sea of smooth aluminum.
Andrew Cunningham

Today, Apple sent out a press release and published a customer support document announcing a new voluntary recall-and-replace program for certain MacBook Pro models that contain batteries

that may overheat, and which may have the potential to be a fire risk.

The recall program is limited to certain 15-inch MacBook Pros from 2015, which were sold “primarily” between 2015 and 2017, Apple says—so pre-Touch Bar, Retina models from near the end of that form factor’s life cycle. The company’s support page offers a field wherein a consumer can input their serial number to find out if their laptop is affected.

“Because customer safety is a top priority,” Apple wrote, “Apple is asking customers to stop using affected 15-inch MacBook Pro units.” The company hasn’t provided details about the nature of the problem other than to say, “in a limited number of older generation 15-inch MacBook Pro units, the battery may overheat and pose a fire-safety risk.”

The support page indicates that users who send in their laptops will have their batteries replaced free of charge, not their whole systems, and that this does not impact other terms of warranty coverage. Replacements can be made when the consumer takes their laptop in to a physical Apple Store, an Apple Authorized Service Provider, or when they mail the device directly to Apple.

“In all cases, your device will be sent to an Apple Repair Center for service,” Apple clarifies, and service could take one to two weeks.

This is far from the first time faulty lithium-ion batteries have led to recalls. Samsung famously tackled a vast and expensive recall of the Samsung Galaxy Note 7 smartphone a couple of years ago—the problem attracted so much attention that some airlines specifically banned use of that model of phone on flights for a period of time, making it part of their flight attendants’ safety scripts.

The battery technology also played a role in Apple’s performance throttling and unintended shutdown controversy on

iPhones in recent years. Lithium-ion batteries account for the majority of the weight of many of today's mobile devices, and they are often cited as one of the key limitations for industrial designers who design consumer electronics products.

Listing image by Andrew Cunningham

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