Don’t park your Hyundai Kona EV inside because it could catch fire

The US National Highway Traffic Safety Administration issued a recall for 2019–2020 Hyundai Kona and 2020 Hyundai Ioniq electric vehicles after over a dozen battery fires were reported. The agency is also warning owners against parking their vehicles near their homes or any flammable structure.

An electrical short in the Kona’s lithium-ion battery cells increases the risk of fire while parked, charging, and driving, NHTSA said, adding, “The safest place to park them is outside and away from homes and other structures.”

Last month, Hyundai announced that it would recall some 76,000 Kona EVs built between 2018 and 2020 over battery fire concerns. It was the second recall for the Kona but the first one that was global in nature. The automaker also said it would recall some Ioniqs and electric buses that it manufactures. In total, Hyundai said it would recall 82,000 vehicles, which it estimates will cost $900 million.

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The Kona’s battery is manufactured by LG Energy Solutions, which, like Hyundai, is also based in South Korea. LG Chem is a major supplier of lithium-ion batteries to automakers like General Motors, Audi, Mercedes-Benz, and their respective parent companies Volkswagen Group and Daimler.

Hyundai is the latest automaker to issue a voluntary recall due to battery defects. Last year, GM said it would recall

nearly 69,000 Chevy Bolts, and Audi recalled over 500 E-Tron SUVs, both over risks for battery fires. China’s Nio recalled nearly 5,000 of its ES8 electric SUVs after multiple reports of battery fires surfaced in 2019.

There’s no evidence that electric vehicles catch fire at a rate that’s any different from internal combustion cars, but the topic has received increased scrutiny as more EVs hit the road. First responders are even being trained to handle EV battery fires since they can’t be extinguished via some traditional methods.

Tesla’s vehicle fires have especially caught a lot of attention — to the point that CEO Elon Musk has publicly pushed back on the coverage of those incidents. Other automakers, like Jaguar, have experienced isolated fires with their electric cars.

https://www.theverge.com/2021/3/29/22357068/hyundai-kona-ev-recall-battery-fire-nhtsa