



WHITE PAPER

January 15, 2026

TO: FIRESCOPE Board of Directors
23300 Castle Street
Riverside, CA 92518-2200

FROM: FIRESCOPE Operations Team, Task Force & Lithium Ion Battery Ad Hoc Subcommittee

SUBJECT: TRANSITION FROM AD HOC LITHIUM ION SUBCOMMITTEE TO STANDING "ENERGY" SUBCOMMITTEE

APPROVAL: The FIRESCOPE Board of Directors approved this White Paper on January 15, 2026

SUMMARY

The Lithium-Ion Battery Ad Hoc Subcommittee was established to provide recommendations on emerging technologies involving Lithium-Ion Batteries. The ad hoc subcommittee produced resources that guide the fire service. There is a need to expand the scope of this group to include emerging and established energy sources. Broadening the scope by establishing a standing FIRESCOPE Energy Subcommittee will allow a fully formed group with the purview to analyse risks associated with energy sources, including Lithium-Ion Batteries, as well as many other sources. This Subcommittee can ensure that California retains a leadership position in the fire service. Other agencies, such as the Seattle Fire Department, have already established Energy Response Teams. A FIRESCOPE Energy Subcommittee can research technology, provide industry best practices, and produce job aids necessary to increase firefighter safety while reducing the risk to the public when energy systems fail.

RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that the Lithium Ion Battery Ad Hoc Subcommittee transition to a formally recognized standing Subcommittee known as the "Energy Subcommittee."

IMPLEMENTATION PLAN

With approval through the decision process by the FIRESCOPE Board of Directors, the Lithium Ion Battery Ad Hoc Subcommittee will expand membership during the next scheduled meeting. Establishing a roster will be the first priority. Once established, the standing Subcommittee will construct a plan of work and charter. All three products will be submitted for approval.



WHITE PAPER

FISCAL IMPACT

The fiscal impact will be commensurate with the time and money a member commits to serving on a Subcommittee. Fire departments that participate can expect to spend a similar amount of funds as any other FIRESCOPE Subcommittee.

FINDINGS

- Battery Guidance (beyond lithium ion)
- Hydrogen (including container ship), CNG, LNG, Renewable Natural Gas (byproduct of decomposition, scrubbed for purity)
- Natural Gas Leaks
- Nuclear
- Underground Vaults
- Emerging technology
- Ethanol (in all forms)
- Solar, Photovoltaic
- Ammonia

The FIRESCOPE Lithium-Ion Battery Ad Hoc Subcommittee was formally established in late 2024, following recognition of the growing risks posed by lithium-ion battery technologies in energy storage systems, electric vehicles, consumer products, and large-scale facilities across California.

However, the scope of lithium-ion batteries alone is insufficient to address the broader spectrum of energy-related emergencies in California. The state faces increasing risks from diverse energy sources, driven by climate change, infrastructure vulnerabilities, and technological advancements. Emerging technologies like hydrogen fuel cells (including risks from container ships and storage), compressed natural gas (CNG), liquefied natural gas (LNG), renewable natural gas (RNG), solar photovoltaic systems, ethanol production, ammonia-based energy, nuclear facilities, and underground electrical vaults present unique challenges, such as explosive leaks, radiation exposure, or specialized suppression requirements. Current steps, including collaboration with utilities and industry for training and PPE, have been ad hoc and inconsistent, particularly in refinery fire departments lacking standardized guidance. The existing Hazardous Materials Subcommittee handles general hazmat responses but lacks the focused expertise to unpack energy-specific risks, such as those involving stored, kinetic, potential, or stranded energy, where first-response companies (FROs) need tailored, accessible tools.

Without expansion, the subcommittee remains limited, potentially leaving gaps in firefighter safety and public protection as California leads in renewable adoption.



WHITE PAPER

CONCLUSION

The establishment of an Energy Subcommittee will build on the foundational work of the Lithium-Ion Battery Ad Hoc Subcommittee by broadening its scope to encompass a comprehensive range of energy sources and associated risks, ensuring proactive research, best practices, and resources that enhance firefighter safety and public resilience. This transition aligns with the FIRESCOPE Mission to improve the California Fire Service through standardized coordination, mutual aid, and innovative emergency management, positioning the state as a national leader in addressing evolving energy emergencies while mitigating threats from emerging technologies and infrastructure failures.

REFERENCES

Seattle Fire Department Energy Response Unit Unveiling. (2023). Available at: <https://fireline.seattle.gov/2023/06/29/seattle-unveils-the-nations-most-capable-apparatus-for-fighting-electrical-fires-in-substations-and-underground-vaults/>