

McMicken Battery Investigation

June 5, 2019 Update



Background

Around 5 p.m. on April 19, there were reports of smoke from the battery system at APS's McMicken site in Surprise, Ariz. Hazardous Material units and first responders arrived on scene to secure the area. For reasons still unknown, the battery system subsequently experienced a catastrophic failure, resulting in injured first responders who were transported to area hospitals. An investigation led by APS, with first-responder representatives, the system integrator, manufacturers and third-party engineering and safety experts, is underway to determine the cause of the incident.

The timeline to complete the investigation is still uncertain, but periodic updates will be posted to report on the process and progress being made. Until the investigation is completed, the parties involved cannot speculate about the root cause of the incident. While the recovery of the first responders injured on scene during the incident remains top of mind for all involved with the investigation, their progress and status will not be included in these updates.

APS and the investigation team intend to share what they can of the ultimate findings, especially to the extent they are helpful to the industry and response agencies.

Investigation Update

- Since assembling the investigation team, the focus has been on establishing a safe and secure area around the battery system in which to conduct inspections, disassembly and the investigative activities. This included installing a climate-controlled tent around the immediate area of the battery and a temporary perimeter fence for safety and security reasons.
- Starting the week of May 27, the focus turned to photographing, tagging and preserving system components and removing battery modules from the container in order to discharge them fully in a safe, staged area on site.
- The battery system consists of 27 racks of 14 modules each, for a total of 378 modules that will be removed. The investigation team expects that safely discharging the modules will be the focus of the work for the next 30 to 45 days.
- The team has developed precautions and contingencies should any modules behave erratically during the discharge process or cannot be discharged.
- The modules will be stored on site until the next phase of the work, which will include further inspection of any components that may help determine the root cause of the incident.