Workplace Safety

The Surprising Benefits of Switching to Rechargeable Flashlight Batteries

Matt Morgan | Jan 12, 2023

Successful manufacturers have a keen eye on things, making sure their costs are low and their operations are efficient. Many would be shocked, however, to find out how much money they're spending—and waste they're producing—on a seemingly small aspect of the business: flashlight batteries.

"It's somewhat automatic—the batteries in your flashlight die, you replace the batteries. When users end up doing the math, they are surprised how many batteries they are actually going through. That cost adds up," says Aaron Freund, director of sales for the Industrial and Fire divisions at ***Streamlight***, a manufacturer of lighting solutions based in Eagleville, Pennsylvania.

Better for the Bottom Line

"When you use rechargeable batteries in your flashlights instead of buying disposable batteries, you see a tremendous amount of hard cost savings," Freund says. "If you have a couple hundred flashlights in the plant, it's very easy to show cost savings, so that you're not buying disposable batteries all the time."

A business that has 100 flashlights, for example, might spend close to $18,000 per year to own those flashlights if they replace the batteries weekly. When the business switches to rechargeable batteries, the cost drops considerably.

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> Streamlight

Case in point: A heavy equipment manufacturer was ***going through about 16,000 replacement batteries***

per year for its flashlights. The company switched to Streamlight's X USB series of flashlights, which runs on a lithium-ion USB rechargeable battery pack. The light features a protected micro-USB port with an on-board safety control circuit that recharges as easily as a phone or tablet. The X USB flashlights cost $10 to $15 more on average than the traditional versions of the flashlight, but because no batteries are wasted, the savings amount to more than $200 per light in the first year. Multiply that by the number of flashlights at the facility and the number of years they're in service, and the boost to the bottom line is staggering.

Watch: Get an In-Depth Look at the MacroStream USB Flashlight

Better for the Environment

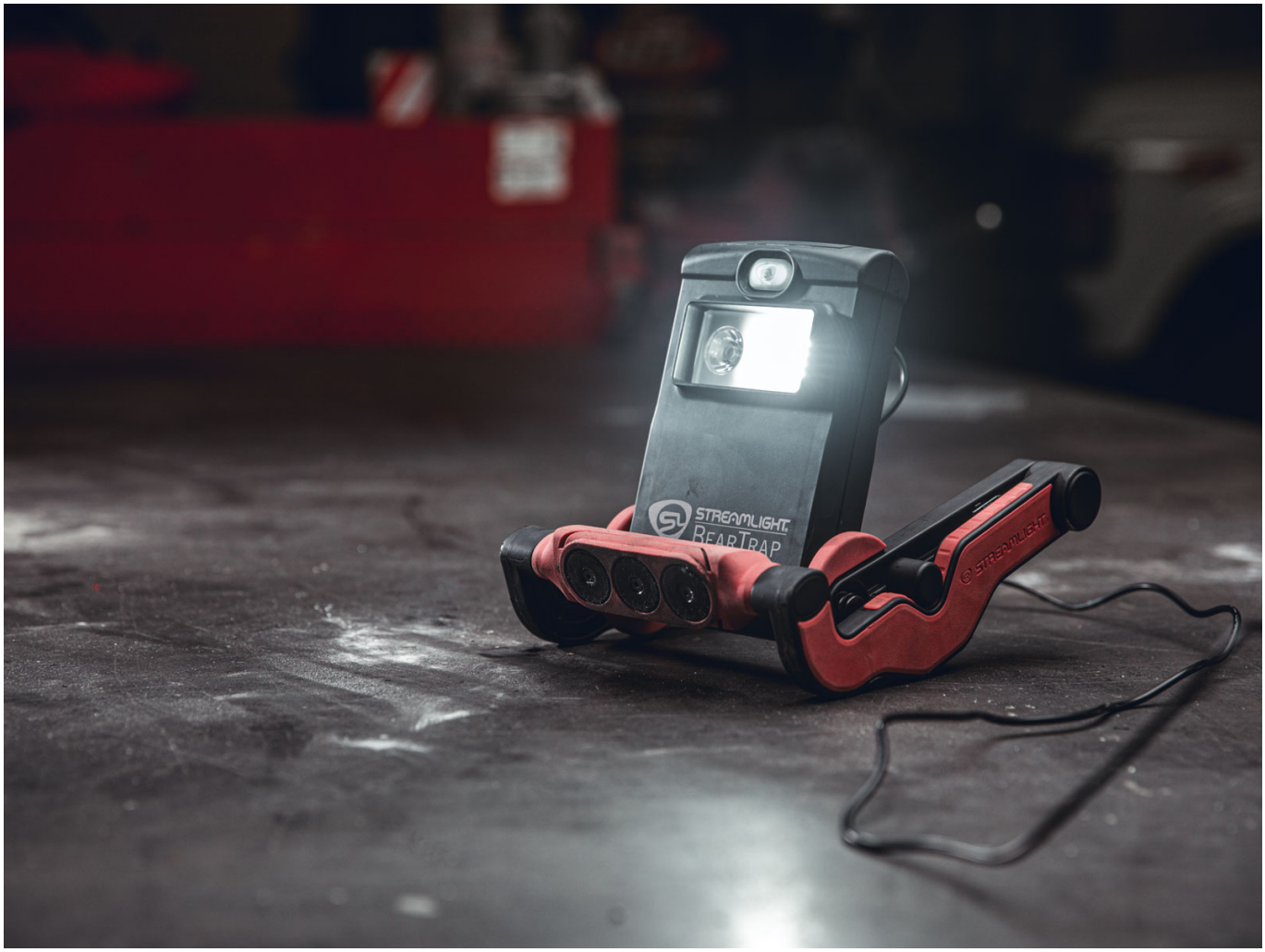
The benefits don't stop there. For manufacturers concerned about sustainability, using rechargeable batteries also nearly eliminates recycling costs and dramatically decreases waste.

"It's not that far off to say flashlights are one of the biggest consumers of alkaline and lithium disposable batteries in a facility," Freund says. "More and more, we talk about helping manufacturers achieve a more sustainable workplace by reducing the number of alkaline batteries that they're using. By moving over to a rechargeable platform, it allows the manufacturer to stop creating as much downstream waste."

Better for the Job at Hand

Setting aside cost savings and sustainability, the light must do what it's made to do, first and foremost.

"Many professionals rely heavily on flashlights to do their job," Freund says. "They may use a flashlight more than any other tool."



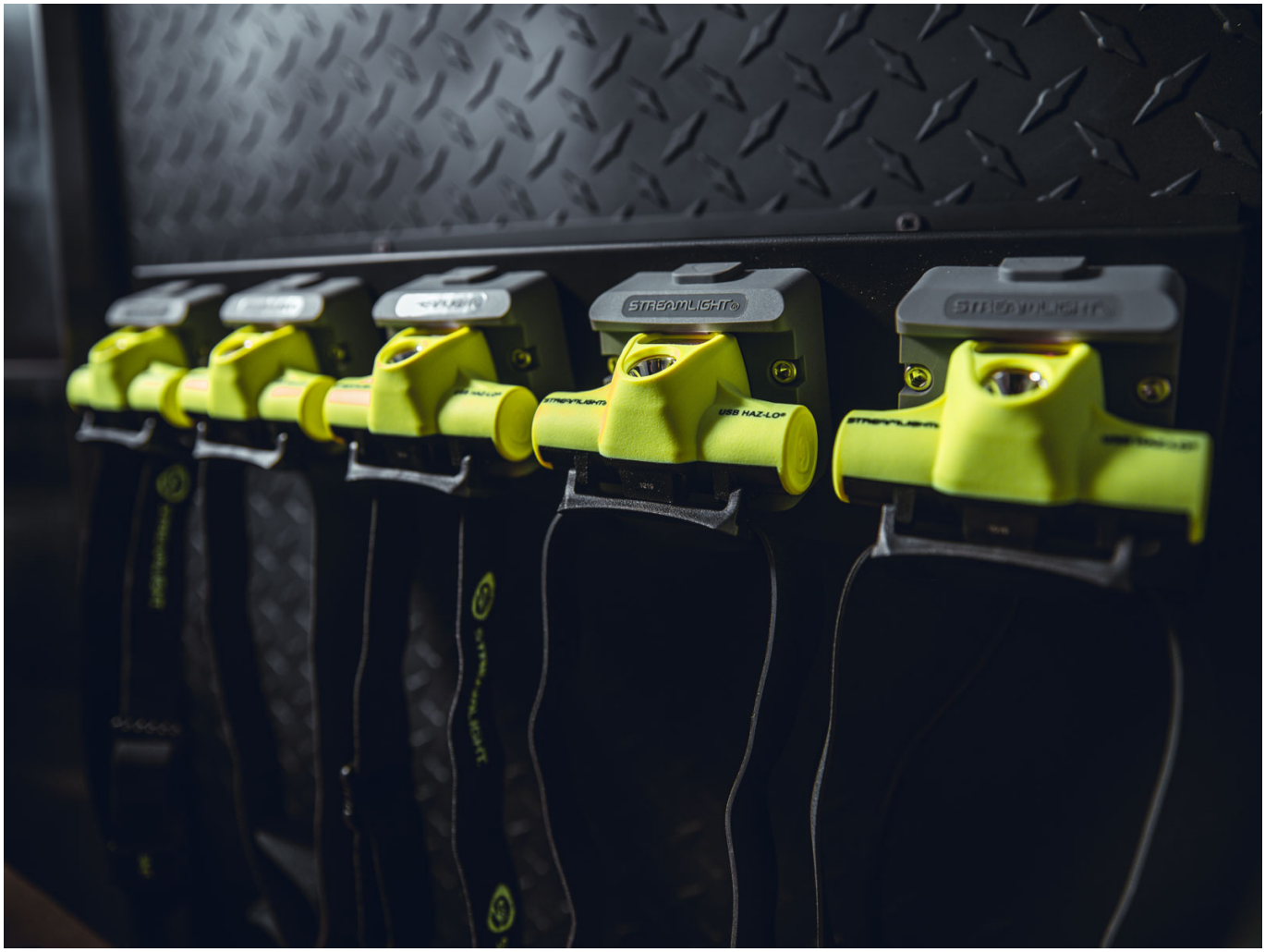
Work lights like this BearTrap rechargeable model can clamp virtually anywhere or stand on their own to light up an environment while keeping the worker's hands free. (Photo courtesy of Streamlight)

It's crucial, then, to have a lighting tool that gives you the right kind of light for the application. "Are you trying to do work at the end of your fingertips? Trying to see across the plant floor? Working inside a machine? Doing a repair that's 50 feet up in the air?" Freund says. "Making sure that you have the right tool that gives you the right light where you need it, that's hugely important."

Flashlights tend to be momentary, for example. An inspector might carry a ***pocket light*** that's easy to store and easy to pull out for 30 seconds or a minute at a time.

"But if you're doing a longer job that requires both of your hands, you want something that's hands-free, which gets you into the headlamp and work light categories," Freund says.

A floodlight provides a softer beam without a lot of flashback that a spot beam might give in some environments—akin to "driving in the fog with your high beams on," Freund says. One solve for this, the ***BearTrap*** multifunction rechargeable work light, delivers a flood of evenly dispersed, bright light and can be switched to spot mode where it's needed. Plus, it clamps virtually anywhere.



Intrinsically safe headlamps like the USB Haz-Lo provide safe, hands-free light in environments where ignitable concentrations of flammable gases, liquids, vapors or dusts can exist. (Photo courtesy of Streamlight)

Manufacturers that need intrinsically safe lights that keep workers' hands free in ***hazardous conditions*** have ***rechargeable options***, too.

"You want to make sure that it holds up in the environment," says Kelly Swope, national accounts manager for Streamlight's Industrial Division. "That's where Streamlight quality comes into play. Professionals have come to count on Streamlight because they know that we back it up. Through our warranty program, we still service lights that have been in the field for 15-20 years or more."

Read more: Consider Beam Patterns When Choosing the Safest Flashlight for Your Job

Streamlight stands behind its products and has done so for the last five decades. The company celebrates its 50th anniversary this year.

"***Innovation*** has been a driving force of our growth over the past 50 years," Freund adds, "so to be able to come out with new products, to be able to have better solutions is huge, and there's no plan to stop that. We are pushing the envelope and being as creative and innovative as we can."

How many flashlight batteries would you say your company uses in a year? Let us know in the comments below.