# Fire and Explosion at Lithium Battery Factory in South Korea Claims 23 Lives



On June 24, 2024, a fire and explosion at the Aricell lithium battery factory in Hwaseong, South Korea, resulted in the deaths of 23 workers. The blaze, which tore through the plant located about 90 minutes southwest of Seoul, produced toxic smoke and caused the workers to lose consciousness and succumb rapidly. The factory stored approximately 35,000 lithium batteries, and the incident was likely triggered by sparks detected in the battery storage area.

Of the 23 deceased, 18 were Chinese nationals, two were South Korean, one was Laotian, and the remaining nationalities are still being determined. The fire also left eight injured, with two in serious condition. Rescue operations, involving over 50 fire officers and two rescue dogs, continued into the next day to locate missing individuals.

A joint investigation by the National Forensic Service, police, and fire department is underway to ascertain the cause of the incident. Aricell CEO Park Soon-kwan issued an apology and pledged to cooperate fully with the investigation. The factory, established in 2020, specializes in lithium primary batteries for sensors and radio communication devices and supplies battery parts to Samsung SDI.

In response, South Korean Prime Minister Han Duck-soo and President Yoon Suk Yeol have called for urgent safety inspections on industrial sites and measures to manage battery-related fires effectively. The incident highlights ongoing concerns about industrial safety standards in South Korea.