SAFETY ALERT
October 2015

BACKGROUND:
Several fires have recently occurred involving military Lithium Ion (Li-Ion) batteries and battery chargers. Although there were no injuries, there was significant fire damage and equipment loss in each case. These incidents were apparently caused by charging unmaintained Lithium-Ion (Li-Ion) rechargeable batteries on battery chargers with non-current software. Additionally some of the Li-Ion batteries involved were commercial versions, as were some of the chargers: PP-8498/U Soldier Portable Charger (SPC), the PP-8481B/U Vehicle Mounted Charger (VMC) and the PP-8481A/U Charger on the Move (COTM).

IMMEDIATE ACTIONS TO TAKE:

A. Battery Maintenance: All military issued Li-Ion rechargeable batteries must be fully charged prior to first use and at least once a year there after. There are commercial versions of these batteries available. They have not been tested or approved for US Army use. Military approved batteries have a contract number above the date code; Military approved chargers have the contract number on the charger faceplate.

B. Inspection: Determine the Software Revision Version:
> **PP-8498/U Soldier Portable Charger (SPC)**: on the program label between ports 1&2.
>> PP-8498/U SPC battery chargers require software version "H".
>
> **PP-8481B/U Vehicle-Mounted Charger (VMC):** inside the cover next to the window.
>> PP-8481B/U VMC battery chargers require software version "C".

If current software has not been installed on the chargers, follow the instructions in Section C.

PP-8498/U and the PP-8481B/U battery chargers with current software installed can be used without monitoring and can be used to recharge batteries while unattended.

Note: The PP-8481A/U Charger On The Move (COTM) software cannot be upgraded.
Use of the PP-8481A/U COTM (or PP-8498/U SPC or PP-8481B/U VMC with outdated software) requires strict monitoring during use as outlined in Section D below.

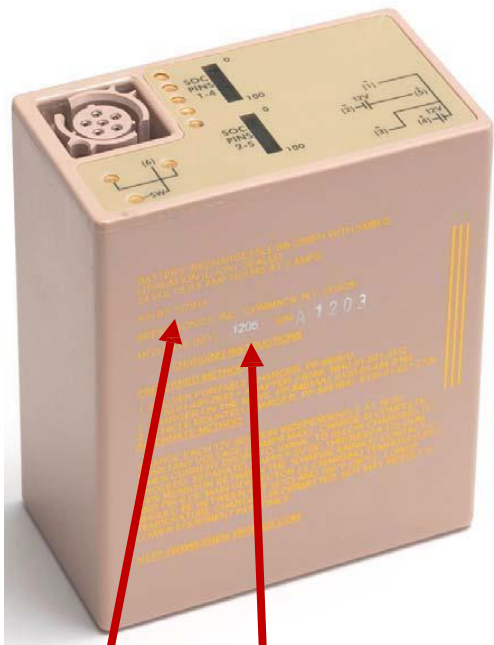**C. Software Update Procedure for chargers with outdated Software:**
Charger software should be updated by 1 December 2015.
To update the charger software go to the website shown below and follow the links there to the charger and software version that you wish to install. http://go.usa.gov/3v8KP

D. Monitored Charging Procedure for chargers with outdated software: If, prior to installation of the software updates, it is mission essential that you must charge unmaintained Li-Ion batteries, using a charger with out-of-date software, **you must monitor the charging. [Do not leave the charger unattended while charging in this configuration.]** Do not attempt to charge more than two batteries in a single charger. Refer to the User Manual or the matrix printed inside the charger lid to properly interpret the charger lights. Defective batteries are to be removed and disposed of in accordance with local disposal procedures.

POCs:
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Date code, Month/Year is here.

Contract number is above the date code.

Contract Number is on the faceplate

Software Update Label is here.
Latest revision (H) should be indicated.