

Re: Disposing of sodium metal – burn it?

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- *From:* <[lucasea@xxxxxxxxxxxxxx](mailto:lucasea@xxxxxxxxxxxxxx)>
  - *Date:* Wed, 23 Aug 2006 20:44:07 GMT
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<[pomerado@xxxxxxxxxxxxxx](mailto:pomerado@xxxxxxxxxxxxxx)> wrote in message  
<news:1156364910.296700.291970@xx>

[lucasea@xxxxxxxxxxxxxx](mailto:lucasea@xxxxxxxxxxxxxx) wrote:

<[mmzax@xxxxxxxxxx](mailto:mmzax@xxxxxxxxxx)> wrote in message  
<news:1156177352.219904.120530@xx>

Thanks to all who made suggestions re. the disposal of 300g of sodium metal (apart from the guy who said dissolve it in NaCl solution).

I've had another suggestion from someone else – burn it. Not having burnt sodium before, I'd like to check with you first. If sodium is burnt, say on a camp fire, does it burn reasonably gently? Is this a safe way of disposing of it?

No, it is not—it is a very dangerous thing to do. It is much more reactive than Mg, which burns extremely hot, and has the added bonus that it melts, which spreads the flames and exposes even more surface area to the air. Almost no fire extinguishers work on it—not water, not CO<sub>2</sub>, not foam, and not halon.

Why won't a halon extinguisher work? Does the hot sodium break down the halocarbons?

Yes. I don't even think it especially takes hot sodium. Far less reactive

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metals like Mg react, sometimes violently, with polyhalogenated organics.

Eric Lucas