



Lithium Metal Batteries as Cargo in 2015

Background

At ICAO Dangerous Goods Panel meeting 24 (DGP/24), the need for a meeting dedicated to lithium metal batteries was raised as there was agreement that additional measures were needed to mitigate risks related to the carriage of lithium metal batteries as cargo on a passenger aircraft, but there was no agreement on how to achieve this during that meeting.

A multidisciplinary meeting was held at the FAA William J. Hughes Technical Centre in February 2014, where the participants reviewed demonstrations on how reactions differed depending on the battery type, manufacturer and chemistry. “The meeting concluded that fires in flight involving certain types and quantities of lithium metal batteries have the potential to result in an uncontrolled fire leading to a catastrophic failure of the airframe.” [ICAO DGP-WG/LB/2-WP/8]

DGP Working Group on Lithium Batteries

At the DGP working group on Lithium Batteries meeting, held in April 2014, the DGP decided to propose that the transport of lithium metal batteries in cargo be restricted to Cargo Aircraft Only. The prohibition on the carriage of lithium metal batteries on passenger aircraft only applies to lithium metal batteries when shipped by themselves (PI 968 Section IA, IB & II). The prohibition does not apply to lithium metal batteries packed with equipment (PI 969) or contained in equipment (PI 970). This agreement was reached based on the review of:

- A report on the outcome of the International Multidisciplinary Lithium Battery Transport Coordination Meeting (DGP-WG/LB/2-WP/1);
- A proposal to forbid the transport of lithium metal batteries as cargo on passenger aircraft (DGP-WG/LB/2-WP/2);
- A safety management review of the provisions for the transportation of lithium metal batteries on passenger aircraft (DGP-WG/LB/2-WP/5);
- Information on extended diversion time operations (EDTO) and fire suppression capabilities and the potential impact the transport of lithium metal batteries may have on certification conditions (DGP WG/LB/2-IP/1);
- Results of the Battery Association of Japan’s tests on lithium coin cells; and
- Facts and data related to lithium metal batteries compiled by an observer from the battery industry.

Lithium Metal Batteries on Passenger Aircraft

The proposal by the DGP has still to be reviewed by the Air Navigation Council and approved by the ICAO Council. Unless they decide otherwise, these changes will become effective 1 January 2015.

It is important to re-iterate that the prohibition on the carriage of lithium metal batteries on passenger aircraft only applies to lithium metal batteries when shipped by themselves (PI 968 Section IA, IB & II). The prohibition does not apply to lithium metal batteries packed with equipment (PI 969) or contained in equipment (PI 970).

The full report along with the working papers can be viewed on the ICAO Website here: <http://www.icao.int/safety/DangerousGoods/Pages/Working-Group-on-Lithium-Batteries-2014.aspx>

You can contact the IATA Dangerous Goods Support team if you have questions or concerns that may not have been addressed in this document: dangood@iata.org.

www.iata.org/dangerousgoods