

Beat: News

Lithium-ion batteries banned as cargo on passenger flights.

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USPA NEWS - Lithium-ion batteries banned as cargo on passenger flights.

The UN aviation agency has prohibited cargo shipments of lithium-ion batteries on passenger aircraft over concerns by pilots and plane makers that they are a fire risk.

The International Civil Aviation Organization's 36-state governing council said the prohibition would be in effect as of 1 April and remain in force until a new fire-resistant packaging standard was designed to transport the batteries.

Lithium-ion batteries, which are rechargeable, can still be transported on cargo planes.

The new packaging standard was expected by 2018, said ICAO council president Olumuyiwa Benard Aliu said in a statement.

The ban would be mandatory for states that are members of the ICAO. Shipping lithium-metal batteries "" which are not rechargeable "" was already banned on planes.

Pilots and aircraft manufacturers are concerned that existing standards are not strong enough to contain lithium battery fires.

A 2015 working paper by an organisation representing plane makers like Boeing found current firefighting systems on airliners could not "suppress or extinguish a fire involving significant quantities of lithium batteries"[2].

But one dangerous goods expert familiar with ICAO's thinking questioned whether a ban on lithium-ion batteries would make passenger planes safer. He said instances of such battery fires usually involved deliberate mislabelling by shippers.

"When the industry banned the shipment of lithium-metal batteries, we saw instances of them being passed off as lithium ion batteries,"[2] said the expert, who was not authorized to speak publicly. "Those people who are not complying now won't comply with a prohibition." [2] (Reporting by Allison Lampert; Editing by Lisa Shumaker)

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