



香港特別行政區政府
民航處

Civil Aviation Department
The Government of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region

Dangerous Goods Advisory Circular DGAC 1/2013

Lithium Batteries Incidents

During the past several weeks, we have received 5 reports of dangerous goods occurrences involving lithium batteries that were either exported from or imported into Hong Kong. Among these cases, 3 of them involved lithium batteries which caught fire or were smoldering. Although all the fires were subsequently extinguished and no person was injured, the incidents revealed serious deficiencies on the part of the consignors (ie. shippers and freight forwarders), which are summarized as follows:

1. Use of false or inadequate descriptions

- In one case, a consignment of lithium batteries falsely described as “Plastic Mould” in the air cargo documents subsequently caught fire.
- In the second case, a consignment of lithium ion batteries for mobile phones described only as “battery” in the cargo documents was found smoldering.
- In the third case, a consignment of mobile phones was falsely described on the air cargo documents as “Electrical Goods (including charger and cable) without battery”. When queried, the freight forwarder claimed that the false description was used to prevent theft.

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2. Incorrect use of Packing Instructions

- In another case involving smoldering lithium batteries, the quantity of notebook computer lithium ion batteries found inside the packages consigned under Section II of Packing Instruction 965 exceeded the 2 battery per package limit.
- Lastly, a consignment of lithium ion batteries consigned under Section 1A of Packing Instruction 965 was found without the individual inner packagings for each battery required by the Packing Instruction. Additionally, the Class 9 hazard labels, which were printed on the outer packagings, were much smaller than the required 100 mm x 100 mm size.

Handling of Lithium Batteries

In view of the serious potential hazards associated with the improper handling of lithium batteries in air transport, consignors (ie. shippers and freight forwarders) of lithium batteries are reminded to comply with the followings:

1. Lithium batteries must be tested to the safety standards of the UN Manual of Tests and Criteria, Part III, subsection 38.3.
2. Lithium batteries must be protected from short circuit by using proper inner packaging. Equipment installed with lithium batteries must be protected from inadvertent activation.
3. The types of lithium batteries and their Packing Instructions must be accurately shown on the air waybill.

4. The quantity limit for lithium ion batteries consigned under Section II of Packing Instruction 965 are 8 cells or 2 batteries per package. For cells and batteries not exceeding 2.7 Wh, the maximum net quantity per package is 2.5 kg only.
5. Overpacks may be used under Section II of Packing Instruction 965 only if each individual package inside the overpacks are made of strong rigid outer packagings meeting the 1.2 m drop test requirement. It should be noted that retail or inner boxes used for other mode of transport may not meet the drop test requirement and it is the responsibility of the consignors (ie. shippers and freight forwarders) performing the overpacks to verify their compliance.

Should you have any query about this circular, please contact Safety Officers (Dangerous Goods) at 2910 6981 or 2910 6982.

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An electronic version of this circular can be downloaded at
<http://www.cad.gov.hk/english/DGAC.html>