



## **DANGEROUS GOODS PANEL (DGP)**

### **TWENTY-THIRD MEETING**

**Montréal, 11 to 21 October 2011**

**Agenda Item 5: Resolution, where possible, of the non-recurrent work items identified by the Air Navigation Commission or the panel:**

**5.1: Review of provisions for the transport of lithium batteries**

### **THE FINDING OF DANGEROUS GOODS IN THE POST**

(Presented by G. A. Leach)

#### **SUMMARY**

This paper provides information about the likelihood of dangerous goods being found in the Post.

## **1. INTRODUCTION**

1.1 The purpose of this information paper is to apprise States of the experience of the United Kingdom Civil Aviation Authority gained whilst reviewing measures in place within the Royal Mail Group (the United Kingdom national postal service) aimed at preventing dangerous goods from being carried in mail (except as permitted by part 1;2.3.2 of the Technical Instructions).

1.2 To gain a better understanding of the scale and scope of dangerous goods improperly placed in the mail, the Royal Mail Group recently evaluated sample sets of packets and parcels selected at random (including air mail and mail that was destined for surface transport). Letters and large letters (6 mm or less in thickness) were considered out of scope as they were considered less likely to contain dangerous goods.

1.3 Whilst some items can be detected during security screening, the detection of dangerous goods is not the primary purpose of the process. Screening alone cannot detect all classes of dangerous goods so cannot guarantee undeclared dangerous goods will not be loaded onto an aircraft. For example, screening would be unlikely to prompt any further scrutiny to the shipment of substances such as Gallium. Accordingly, during the sampling exercise if any item could not conclusively be identified as non-dangerous goods (e.g. shoes, documents, etc.) it was opened and inspected. Any item found to be dangerous goods (e.g. based on consumer hazard labelling) was logged.

- 1.4 The initial round of sampling lasted two weeks and sampled 30,397 items. Of these:
- a) x-ray screeners visually identified 100 mail items containing dangerous goods (mostly aerosols and ammunition); and
  - b) a further 531 mail items could not conclusively be identified as non-dangerous goods and when opened 323 of these were found to contain dangerous goods.

1.5 The dangerous goods found included aerosols and other compressed gases, perfumes, cigarette lighters, lithium batteries, nail varnish, acetone, ammunition, paint and corrosive liquids. The Royal Mail Group concluded that there is routinely in the order of 1-3% dangerous goods within the mail (including regional variations). Further sampling has been scheduled to monitor seasonal variations.

1.6 In response to these findings the Royal Mail Group has mapped out a programme of measures with the aim of reducing the prevalence of dangerous goods in the mail. Stage 1 of the programme includes (amongst other actions) clarifying their policies, both to staff and customers and requiring post office counter staff to query whether a packet contains dangerous goods, whilst referring the customer to a picture of common consumer items that are dangerous goods. Sometime after implementation, there will be further sampling and if necessary, further measures will be introduced.

1.7 We continue to liaise with the Royal Mail Group to ensure that deployed measures prove effective and that discoveries of undeclared dangerous goods are responded to appropriately, including notifying the consignor of their error.

1.8 Whilst it may be true that dangerous goods represent a small percentage of the packets and parcels moved by air each day, the potential catastrophic consequences of a single consignment of undeclared dangerous goods necessitates the implementation of all reasonable mitigation available. Accordingly, other States may wish to review the measures in place within their national postal services.

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