



WORKING PAPER

**DANGEROUS GOODS PANEL (DGP)
MEETING OF THE WORKING GROUP OF THE WHOLE**

Abu Dhabi, United Arab Emirates, 7 to 11 November 2010

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

5.2: Review of provisions for dangerous goods relating to batteries

LITHIUM BATTERY STATE LETTER

(Presented by J. McLaughlin)

SUMMARY

This paper proposes the issuance of an advisory letter to States regarding the safe transport of lithium batteries.

Action by the DGP-WG is in paragraph 2.

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 At its 22nd meeting, the DGP discussed ways of enhancing the safety of lithium batteries through outreach efforts aimed at increasing awareness, ensuring compliance and ultimately reducing the likelihood of future incidents (see paragraph 5.4.8 of DGP/22-WP/100). During these discussions, it was noted that nominated DGP members covered only seventeen States. It was therefore suggested that a State letter highlighting the need for outreach and providing guidance on the safe handling of lithium batteries could be issued to reach all Member States. It was agreed that such a letter could be drafted by a working group and then considered by the panel prior to issuance.

2. ACTION BY THE DGP-WG

2.1 The DGP-WG is invited to review the attached draft lithium battery State letter with a view to approving its distribution to all ICAO Member States.

APPENDIX

DRAFT LITHIUM BATTERY STATE LETTER

This letter is to advise ICAO Member States of the ICAO Dangerous Goods Panel's (DGP) concerns involving the transport of lithium batteries by aircraft, and to request States' assistance in helping to ensure their safe transport. Lithium batteries are commonly transported both as cargo and in carry-on or checked baggage, and are transported in packaged form as well as installed in or packed with equipment.

As the demand for lithium batteries increases, so do the risks associated with their transport, especially aboard aircraft. Since their introduction to the marketplace, a number of air transport related incidents and numerous additional non-transport incidents involving lithium batteries and devices powered by lithium batteries have been reported. These incidents have involved both passenger and cargo aircraft, and have occurred in flight as well as both prior to loading and after unloading. Several incidents have involved fire aboard aircraft and in some instances have led to emergency landings.

The incidents that have occurred have led the DGP to more comprehensively assess the risk posed by the air transport of lithium batteries, and to work actively to mitigate that risk. The DGP recognizes that a multi-faceted approach is necessary in order to comprehensively address the issue. Specifically, the DGP believes that clear and robust regulatory requirements, outreach to affected industries, and enhanced compliance efforts are key to reducing the likelihood of future incidents.

The ICAO Technical Instructions for the Safe Transport of Dangerous Goods by Air (the Technical Instructions) contain specific requirements for the proper preparation and transport of lithium batteries. Recently the DGP developed these requirements further, with particular emphasis on the following:

- Increased packaging standards;
- Enhanced hazard communication to communicate the presence of lithium batteries in transportation, including a new handling label;
- Forbidding the air transport of damaged or defective lithium batteries; and
- Requiring the reporting of all incidents involving the transport of lithium batteries to the appropriate national authority.

Compliance with the detailed requirements of the Technical Instructions is critical to promoting the safe transport of lithium batteries. Consequently the DGP has worked to promote outreach to affected industries by publishing guidance regarding compliance with the applicable requirements, which can be found at: <http://www.icao.int/anb/FLS/DangerousGoods/> Additional guidance is available on member state websites, such as: <http://safetravel.dot.gov/index.html>

Enhancing compliance verification and oversight efforts are functions under the direct control of member States. To ensure the highest safety standards relating to lithium batteries are achieved, it is imperative that States:

- a) engage with their affected industry to promote awareness of existing requirements ;

- b) actively enforce the existing requirements of the Technical Instructions pertaining to the transport of lithium batteries;
- c) ensure persons engaged in the transport of lithium batteries have received training or instruction as required by the Technical Instructions; and
- d) ensure incidents involving lithium batteries are reported to the appropriate national authority and brought to the attention of the ICAO DGP.

States are encouraged to work individually and collectively to address this important safety issue and to promote the safe transport of lithium batteries by air.

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