

Dangerous Goods Regulations, IATA

Extract from 56th edition, 2015, clause 2.3.3.2*

- “ Lithium-ion battery powered wheelchairs or other similar mobility aids for use by passengers whose mobility is restricted by either a disability, their health or age, or a temporary mobility problem (e.g. broken leg), are permitted in air transport but subject to the following conditions:
- (a) the batteries must be of a type which meets the requirements of each test in the UN Manual of Tests and Criteria, Part III, subsection 38.3;
 - (b) the operator must verify that:
 - (1) battery terminals are protected from short circuits, e.g. by being enclosed within a battery container,
 - (2) the battery must be securely attached to the wheelchair or mobility aid; and
 - (3) electrical circuits have been inhibited.
 - (c) the mobility aids must be carried in a manner such that they are protected from being damaged by the movement of baggage, mail, or other cargo;
 - (d) where a battery powered or other similar mobility aid is specifically designed to allow its battery(ies) to be removed by the user (e.g. collapsible)
 - (1) the battery(ies) must be removed. The wheelchair / mobility aid may then be carried as checked baggage without restriction;
 - (2) the battery(ies) must be protected from short circuit by insulating the terminals (e.g. by taping over exposed terminals); IDFS/Cargo Page 13, 04/10/2012IATA Lithium Battery Guidance Document - 2013
 - (3) the removed battery(ies) must be protected from damage (e.g.) by placing each battery in a protective pouch. The battery(ies) must be carried in the passenger cabin;
 - (4) removal of the battery from the device must be performed by following the instructions of the manufacturer or device owner;
 - (5) the battery must not exceed 300 Wh;;
 - (6) a maximum of one spare battery not exceeding 300 Wh or two spares each not exceeding 160 Wh may be carried; and
 - (e) the pilot-in-command must be informed of the location of the mobility aid with an installed battery or the location of the lithium battery when removed and carried in the cabin.
 - (f) It is recommended that passengers make advance arrangements with each operator.

Note: most scooters have a key which can be switched to the off position, removed and given to the passenger for safe keeping. However, most power chairs are switched on and off with a push-button which could be reactivated in flight by the inadvertent movement of baggage or cargo. Accordingly, further steps are required to inhibit the circuits of such devices, for example separating the power supply between the batteries and the control mechanism by disconnecting cable plugs or connectors, or inserting an inhibiting plug. Any exposed electrical terminals must be insulated to prevent short circuit. Batteries should not be routinely disconnected or removed, since this is often very difficult to do, and if not done properly can increase the risk of a fire. A check should also be made that batteries are securely attached to the mobility aid and battery terminals are protected from short circuit. If it is evident that an electric mobility aid has not been made safe, it must not be loaded.

Once loaded onboard the aircraft or into a ULD, the electric mobility aid should be returned to drive mode as this will help prevent it moving with the potential for damage. Devices must be secured to prevent movement and may require load-spreading (consult the airline ground handling manual for details).”

Transport within Passenger Baggage

“Certain restrictions apply to the carriage of lithium metal and lithium ion batteries even when carried by passengers as baggage. Once again, only batteries that have successfully passed the Tests outlined in Part III, Sub-Section 38.3 of the UN Manual of tests and criteria may be carried.

As said before batteries manufactured, distributed or sold by major companies do meet this requirement, however, certain replacement batteries which are not OEM or aftermarket batteries but simply low-cost copies of those – also called “fakes” – may not have undergone the required tests. Untested batteries are consequently excluded from air transport.

Users of equipment powered by lithium metal and lithium ion batteries should therefore be vigilant when buying replacement batteries from unknown sources, such as on markets or Internet auction platforms. The differences between genuine and copied battery types may not be visible but could be very dangerous; such untested batteries may have a risk of overheating or causing fires.

Because of the risks associated with the carriage of spare batteries these may not be transported within passenger checked baggage. Spare batteries must be in carry-on baggage.” (IATA Lithium Battery Guidance Document – 2013, p12)

***Note: there was no change to 2.3.3.2 from the previous 2014 and 2013 editions. The 2012 edition only permitted a maximum of 160 Wh, but this has now been superseded by later editions.**