



DGCA Aviation Safety Circular (2026-01)

Subject: *International restrictions on carriage of lithium batteries on board aircraft (Passengers/Crew)*

Effective Date: 01-Feb-2026

Distribution: All Stakeholders

1. Purpose

To standardize and enforce the international passenger/crew restrictions for carriage of:

- Portable Electronic Devices (PED)
- Portable Medical Electronic Devices (PMED)
- Spare lithium batteries (including power banks)

These restrictions are based on battery Watt-hour (Wh) rating (lithium-ion) or lithium metal content (g) (non-rechargeable).

Note: Lithium batteries are not 'banned' outright. Carriage is permitted only under the conditions and limits in this circular, and spare batteries/power bank are prohibited in checked baggage.

2. Applicability

This circular applies to all:

- AOC holders / air operators (passenger and cargo operations where passenger baggage is handled).
- Check-in, boarding gate, ground handling, security screening support staff.
- Cabin crew and load control staff (as applicable to passenger baggage).

3. Legal/Regulatory Basis

This Circular is issued pursuant to DGCA's regulatory/oversight responsibilities.



4. References

- ICAO, Technical Instructions for the Safe Transport of Dangerous Goods by Air (Doc 9284)
- FAA, “Lithium Batteries in Baggage” (24-Sep-2025) – passenger baggage safety summary.
- IATA, passenger guidance (PED/PMED/spares; Wh/g thresholds; smart baggage; e-cigarettes).

5. Definitions

- PED: “Portable Electronic Device (e.g., phone, tablet, laptop, camera)”.
- PMED: “Portable Medical Electronic Device (e.g., medically required portable equipment)”.
- Spare battery: “A battery not installed in equipment, including loose batteries and removable battery packs”.
- Power bank: “A device whose primary purpose is to supply power to another device; treated as a spare battery”.
- Battery rating (Wh vs Ah) – how to determine Wh:

For passenger provisions, lithium battery limits are expressed in Watt-hours (Wh) (lithium-ion) or lithium content (g) (lithium metal). Many consumer products display capacity in mAh/Ah. Where Wh is not shown, it shall be calculated as:

- $Wh = Ah \times V$
- $Wh = (mAh \times V) \div 1000$

Examples:

- 10,000 mAh at 3.7 V → $(10,000 \times 3.7) \div 1000 = 37 \text{ Wh} (\leq 100 \text{ Wh})$
- 20,000 mAh at 3.7 V → $(20,000 \times 3.7) \div 1000 = 74 \text{ Wh} (\leq 100 \text{ Wh})$

Note 1: If the battery voltage (V) is not marked, staff shall treat the item as “rating unknown” and apply the operator’s approval / escalation process.

Note 2: “Important: Many powers banks display mAh based on internal cell voltage (~3.6–3.7V). Do not use the USB output voltage (e.g., 5V) unless the manufacturer explicitly states the rating is at 5V.”



6. Mandatory passenger/crew carriage rules (to be enforced):

6.1 Carriage conditions by battery size (table):

(Wh) rating or lithium metal content	Configuration	Carry-on baggage	baggage	Operator approval
$\leq 100 \text{ Wh} / \leq 2 \text{ g lithium metal}$	In equipment (PED or PMED)	Yes (max 15 PED/PMED (1))	Yes	No
	Spare battery(ies)	Yes (max 20 spare batteries (2))	No	No
$> 100 \text{ Wh to } \leq 160 \text{ Wh}$	In equipment (PED or PMED)	Yes	Yes	Yes
	Spare battery(ies)	Yes (max 2 spare batteries)	No	Yes
$> 160 \text{ Wh}$	Must be prepared and carried as cargo in accordance with the Dangerous Goods Regulations			
<i>(Lithium metal > 2 g to ≤ 8 g (PMED only))</i>	In equipment (PED or PMED)	Yes	Yes	Yes
	Spare batteries for PMED	Yes (max 2 spare batteries)	No	Yes

- (1) Each person is limited to a maximum of 15 PED. The operator may approve the carriage of more than 15 PED).
- (2) Each person is limited to a maximum of 20 spare batteries of any type. The operator may approve the carriage of more than 20 batteries).

7. Specific prohibitions and handling requirements

7.1 Devices in checked baggage (when permitted)

Devices containing lithium batteries (e.g., phones, tablets, laptops, cameras) should be kept in accessible carry-on baggage whenever practicable.

If a PED is placed in checked baggage:

- Protect from damage and prevent unintentional activation .
- Must be completely switched off (not sleep/hibernation).



7.2 Spare batteries (including power banks)

- Spares must be individually protected against short circuit (original packaging or insulated terminals; e.g., tape / separate bag / pouch) .
- Carry-on only (spares are not permitted in checked baggage) .
- If carry-on baggage is checked at the gate or planeside, all spare lithium batteries, portable rechargers/power banks, and electronic cigarettes/vaping devices shall be removed from the baggage and kept with the passenger in the aircraft cabin.
- Power banks are considered spare batteries and are restricted to carry-on baggage only .
- Damaged, defective, leaking, swollen, or recalled lithium batteries, or recalled devices containing lithium batteries, **shall not** be carried in either carry-on or checked baggage.

7.3 Electronic cigarettes / personal vaporizers.

Must be carried in carry-on baggage only and should remain accessible. Recharging on board is not permitted; measures must be taken to prevent accidental activation and to protect the device/battery from damage and short circuits.

7.4 Smart luggage (baggage with integrated lithium batteries):

If the baggage has a lithium battery (other than button cells):

- If it will be checked: battery must be removed and carried in cabin; OR the baggage must be carried in cabin .
- Forbidden if the battery is designed to charge other devices and cannot be removed.

8. Required operator actions

Each operator shall:

1. Implement check-in and gate procedures to prevent spare batteries (including power banks) and e-cigarettes/vapes from being placed in checked baggage, including gate/planeside checked bags (items must be removed and kept in the cabin).
2. Ensure staff are briefed to deny carriage of damaged/defective/recalled lithium batteries and recalled devices containing lithium batteries.
3. Include the Wh / g thresholds and the operator-approval cases in passenger communications (website, pre-flight messages, counter signage) .



4. Passenger communications shall instruct passengers to keep battery-powered devices in accessible carry-on baggage where practicable and to keep spares/power banks/e-cigs accessible for rapid response in case of smoke/fire.
5. Ensure staff guidance covers: device shutdown requirements, spare battery protection, e-cigarette rules, and smart luggage battery removability.
6. Operators shall provide check-in/gate staff with a simple Wh conversion job-aid (mAh/Ah to Wh) and an escalation point for “unknown rating” items.

/ DGCA President

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