

# Transport of lithium batteries on cargo aircraft

## Background

Since their introduction in the early 1990s Lithium batteries have been responsible for over 40 reported incidents involving smoke, fire, extreme heat or explosion in air transport. The incidents have occurred both in the passenger cabin and in cargo compartments when batteries have been shipped as cargo on passenger and cargo-only aircraft. Furthermore testing has shown that that a Lithium Ion battery fire will easily propagate through the entire shipment of batteries, and that the Halon fire suppression systems used in the holds of many aircraft are ineffective in controlling a Lithium battery fire.

Despite this when these batteries shipped as cargo they are not subject to the majority of the provisions for dangerous goods in the ICAO Technical Instructions, including the requirement to place a dangerous goods label on the package, the requirement to notify the pilot in command of their presence, the requirement for airline personnel to perform an acceptance check of the package, or the requirement for shippers to be trained in the dangerous goods regulations.

## IFALPA Position

IFALPA believes this situation is unacceptable since the carriage of these batteries presents a risk to the aircraft which is not properly addressed by current regulations. Accordingly, IFALPA argues that ICAO Technical Instructions must be revised to protect passengers, flight crew and the aircraft from the risk of a fire caused or made worse by the shipment of lithium batteries as cargo.

## Additional Information

To find out more about IFALPA's position concerning the transport of Lithium batteries as cargo please refer to the Briefing Leaflet *12DGBL01 - Transport of Lithium Batteries as cargo*. To access this document click [here](#).