

Safety Advice about counterfeit, damaged and recalled batteries

Since 1991, batteries or battery-powered devices have been involved in over 100 recorded incidents of smoke, fire or explosion in air transportation. In order to be safely transported, batteries are required to undergo testing prescribed by the United Nations (UN) Sub Committee of Experts on the Transport of Dangerous Goods. Additionally, batteries must be designed to prevent short circuit and overcharging, and must be free from damage. Due to the expensive nature of these requirements, there is a substantial and growing supply of counterfeit batteries, particularly in Asia. These batteries have often not undergone the rigorous design and testing requirements prescribed by regulation and have a higher likelihood of overheating, catching fire or exploding.

In order to ensure the safe transport of batteries by passengers and crew members, IFALPA recommends the following:

-  Do not buy counterfeit batteries or battery powered devices. Look for the mark of an independent testing or standards organisation, such as Underwriters Laboratories (UL) or International Electrotechnical Commission (IEC), in order to determine that batteries are not counterfeit. Some certification labels include a logo and a reference number. Trademarked logos that appear different than usual may signal a counterfeit.
-  Buy batteries only with known brand names from reputable sources. Particular care should be taken when purchasing devices at markets in Asia or any other questionable location. If the price is “too good to be true”, it could be because the product is an inferior and unsafe counterfeit, or just an unsafe poor quality battery.
-  Do not buy batteries from auction websites such as E-Bay, Amazon, Craigslist, or from street vendors.
-  Scrutinise the product, packaging and labelling. Misspelled words are a strong indicator of a counterfeit battery.
-  Do not carry, charge or use batteries that have been damaged.
-  Do not carry, charge or use recalled batteries on aircraft. Recalled batteries have a higher potential of overheating and fire due to defects identified by the manufacturer. Check battery recall information at the manufacturer’s website, or at national Consumer Product Safety agency websites.
-  Do not ship recalled batteries via air transport. If a battery has been recalled due to a safety concern, ensure that the battery is returned to the manufacturer via an approved method that does not involve air transport.
-  Take steps to prevent crushing, puncturing, or putting a high degree of pressure on the battery, as this can cause damage and an internal short-circuit, resulting in overheating or fire.

IFALPA provides this data for information only, In all cases pilots should follow their company's guidance and procedures.

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