



**WORKING PAPER**

**DANGEROUS GOODS PANEL (DGP)  
WORKING GROUP MEETING (DGP-WG/17)**

**Montreal, 24 to 28 April 2017**

**Agenda Item 6: Other business**

**MAIL SAFETY**

(Presented by D. Brennan)

**SUMMARY**

This working paper seeks some discussion on the safety of mail and in particular what further must be done by designated postal operators and civil aviation authorities to prevent the entry into air mail of dangerous goods not permitted by Part 1;2.3.2.

**Action by the DGP-WG:** The DGP-WG is invited to discuss the questions raised and what steps can be taken with the Universal Postal Union (UPU) to ensure that the designated postal operators (DPO) are actively preventing the introduction of dangerous goods into air mail, with particular focus on preventing lithium batteries from being introduced into mail.

**1. INTRODUCTION**

1.1 The 2013-2014 Edition of the Technical Instructions included revised provisions for mail to require that all designated postal operators (DPOs) develop and implement dangerous goods training for employees involved in the acceptance and handling of mail articles.

1.2 The 2013-2014 Edition of the Technical Instructions also included a requirement that the procedures of DPOs for controlling the introduction of dangerous goods in mail into air transport be subject to review and approval by the civil aviation authority of the State where the mail is accepted.

1.3 These provisions were introduced by the DGP to address a request by the Universal Postal Union (UPU) that DPOs be allowed to accept into airmail lithium batteries contained in equipment, primarily for consumer electronic items such as mobile phones, tablets and laptops.

1.4 The DGP also required that before a DPO could introduce the acceptance of lithium batteries contained in equipment, the DPO must have received specific approval from the civil aviation authority in their State.

1.5 All of these requirements were put in place by the DGP in an effort to improve the safety of mail shipped by air, where it was seen that with the increasing use of post by e-commerce sellers that there was an increased risk of dangerous goods being introduced into international mail, despite the general prohibition of dangerous goods in international mail.

1.6 Since these provisions were introduced it is presumed that all DPOs have completed appropriate dangerous goods training for the applicable personnel and their civil aviation authority has reviewed and approved the DPO's dangerous goods procedures. Of the approximately 190 States that are part of the UPU, there are just 26 DPOs listed as being approved to accept lithium batteries contained in equipment.

1.7 However, incidents involving lithium batteries continue to happen in mail, and many lithium batteries are detected in mail. This is hardly surprising given the vast number that are offered for sale through e-commerce sites such as Alibaba and e-Bay. A quick search for "lithium ion battery" on one e-commerce site returned 7,900 results. A sample of the listings that were reviewed offered delivery through mail, regardless of the location of the sender.

1.8 This raises very significant safety concerns given that as of 1 April 2016 all lithium ion batteries are forbidden as cargo on passenger aircraft. Significant volumes of international mail are carried on passenger aircraft.

1.9 Related to mail, but not addressed in Part 1;2.3 is where a DPO operates an extraterritorial office of exchange (ETOE) in another State. This was discussed at the DGP some years ago, but without a satisfactory resolution.

1.10 Some immediate questions come to mind with respect to compliance with the provisions of Part 1;2.3.3:

- a) Have all DPOs developed and implemented procedures for preventing the introduction of dangerous goods into the mail?
- b) Have all civil aviation authorities reviewed and approved the DPO's procedures?
- c) Are the procedures of the DPO subject to periodic review or was the review done once, never to be done again?
- d) Should a civil aviation authority's compliance with the oversight of the DPO be included in the ICAO safety oversight audit program?
- e) Should Part 1;2.3 specifically identify the requirements that apply to ETOE with respect to the review and approval of the procedures of the ETOE for preventing the introduction of dangerous goods into the mail, i.e. the civil aviation authority that is responsible for approving these procedures?

2. **ACTION BY THE DGP-WG**

2.1 The DGP-WG is invited to discuss the questions raised and what steps can be taken with the UPU to ensure that DPO are actively preventing the introduction of dangerous goods into air mail, with particular focus on preventing lithium batteries from being introduced into mail.

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