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Mis-declared Lithium Batteries



Compliant lithium batteries packaged, documented and tendered for air cargo in accordance with the Dangerous Goods Regulations (DGR) are safe for transport. Unfortunately, an increasing number of incidents have demonstrated that intentionally mis-declared and/or non-compliant lithium batteries are smuggled in cargo shipments thus bypassing the critical packaging, documentation and tendering requirements under the DGR. The resulting dangerous situation for the handling and carriage of such shipments must be addressed. Clearly, the act of smuggling contraband across international borders falls under the mandate of Customs authorities. However, this matter is also a supply chain security problem which is comprised of a multitude of actors and stakeholders who have a collective responsibility to ensure that the security of the supply chain is not compromised.

IATA is working with Civil Aviation and Customs authorities to raise awareness of this issue throughout the global supply chain network. Customs authorities can leverage their communication and outreach mechanisms, both internally and externally (particularly those who have Authorized Economic Operator (AEO) programs). Furthermore, the World Customs Organization (WCO) can raise awareness of this important aviation issue to its members through appropriate meetings such as the WCO SAFE Working Group and the Technical Experts Group on Air Cargo Security (TEGACS).

Addressing this complex issue will require a multi-pronged approach involving regulatory changes, new policies, and technology solutions, to ensure full compliance at the point of manufacture prior to entering the supply chain. Meanwhile, raising awareness among all concerned stakeholders is a critical first step, hence this Bulletin.

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