

USA Today

Packing e-cigarettes in luggage is fire risk, FAA warns

[Bart Jansen](#), USA TODAY January 23, 2015

WASHINGTON — The Federal Aviation Administration is warning airlines about fire risks from electronic cigarettes stored in checked luggage and is recommending that passengers bring them into the cabins instead.

In several incidents, e-cigarettes have overheated or caught fire when the heating element was activated accidentally, according to the FAA. An e-cigarette caused a fire in August in the checked luggage of a JetBlue flight in Boston, which forced the plane's evacuation.

On Jan. 4 at Los Angeles International Airport, a checked bag that had missed its flight was found on fire in a baggage area and emergency responders blamed it on an overheated e-cigarette inside the bag, FAA said.

"These incidents and several others occurring outside of air transportation have shown that e-cigarettes can overheat and cause fires when the heating element is accidentally activated or left on," FAA said.

The FAA alerted airlines Friday about an international bulletin that describes several incidents involving e-cigarettes, which have batteries that deliver nicotine through a heated vapor that resembles smoke.

The International Civil Aviation Organization, a branch of the United Nations, recommends banning e-cigarettes in checked baggage.

FAA urged airlines to require passengers to carry e-cigarettes and related devices solely in the aircraft cabin, "where overheating or fire can be observed and handled more quickly." The agency asked airlines to explain the policy to passengers through websites, news releases, when tickets are bought, and during check-in.

Ray Story, spokesman for the Tobacco Vapor Electronic Cigarette Association, said e-cigarettes pose no problem when packed correctly in static-free packaging, but that occasionally irresponsible people will tamper with them or pack them carelessly.

"For those individuals who have a passion for the product, there is no reason they couldn't carry it on their person," Story said.

More than 2.5 million Americans use electronic cigarettes, according to an October statement by the U.S. Fire Administrator.

"The market is definitely growing," said Story, the industry spokesman.

While fires and explosions are rare, 25 such incidents occurred from 2009 through August 2014, according to the Fire Administrator.

Nine people were injured in those incidents, which usually happened when the cigarettes were charging, the office said. The shape and construction makes them like "flaming rockets" when a lithium-ion battery fails, the office said.

<http://www.usatoday.com/story/news/2015/01/23/faa-electronic-cigarettes-icao/22234903/>