

Federal Aviation Administration
Civil Aviation Security
Dangerous Goods Advisory Bulletin

Information of Concern to Air Carriers

Subject: Fireworks Manufactured in Mexico
Number: DGAB-98-01A
Date: March 27, 1998

INFORMATION: The Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) is investigating several incidents in which fireworks manufactured in Mexico and placed in passenger baggage resulted in a fire. Fortunately, these fires were discovered during the aircraft loading process. The fireworks causing the fires are novelties commonly described as "poppers," "snappers," "torpedoes," "popping seeds," or "popping caps." They are small items that explode when dropped, producing a report and flash.

Both the Hazardous Materials Regulations (HMR; 49 CFR Parts 171-180) and the ICAO Technical Instructions for the Safe Transport of Dangerous Goods prohibit fireworks and novelties for transportation as cargo to, from, or within the United States unless they have been granted prior approval from the Associate Administrator for Hazardous Materials Safety, Research and Special Programs Administration (RSPA), U.S. Department of Transportation. In addition, both domestic and international regulations prohibit fireworks or novelties to be carried in a passenger's checked or carry-on baggage.

TRANSPORT OF FIREWORKS AND NOVELTIES IN PASSENGER

BAGGAGE: Domestic or international transport of any fireworks or novelty, even if approved, is strictly forbidden in a passenger's checked or carry on baggage. Air carriers operating flights with passengers having ready access to these types of fireworks are strongly encouraged to alert passengers of the danger and restrictions associated with them. Violations are to be reported to the nearest FAA Security field office.

TRANSPORT OF FIREWORKS AND NOVELTIES AS CARGO: Based on subsequent FAA investigations into the cause of these fires, it appears that these novelty fireworks are forbidden explosives under 49 CFR 173.54.

Fireworks must be manufactured and approved for transportation in accordance with applicable requirements of American Pyrotechnic Association (APA) Standard 87-1. Either the manufacturer or an authorized examining agency then must conduct a thermal stability test. After testing, the manufacturer must apply in writing for approval from RSPA. If approved, the manufacturer receives from RSPA a written notification with an assigned "EX-number." This approval is required for both domestic and international transport of fireworks and novelties as cargo.

To conform to manufacturing requirements of APA Standard 87-1, these novelty fireworks may not contain more than 1.0 milligram of explosive composition each,

coated on small bits of sand and wrapped in paper. They are limited to individual containers of not more than 50 units cushioned with sawdust to reduce friction.

FAA Enforcement Action: The FAA will continue to actively pursue enforcement actions against all parties offering to an air carrier as cargo or transporting as passenger baggage, fireworks that are not in compliance with the Hazardous Materials Regulations. Violators are subject to civil penalties of \$27,500 and criminal prosecution with penalties of \$250,000 or more and up to five years in prison.

/s/

Charles N. Lovinski
Program Manager
Dangerous Goods and Cargo Security