



U.S. Department
of Transportation
**Federal Aviation
Administration**

InFO

Information for Operators

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http://www.faa.gov/other_visit/aviation_industry/airline_operators/airline_safety/info

An InFO contains valuable information for operators that should help them meet certain administrative, regulatory, or operational requirements with relatively low urgency or impact on safety.

Subject: Cochlear Implants Exempt from Rules Regarding “Portable Electronic Devices”

Purpose: This InFO resolves any rumor or misinformation regarding cochlear implants. They are hearing aids within the meaning of Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) regulations and may be used by passengers.

Background: A cochlear implant is a small, complex electronic device that bypasses damaged parts of an ear and directly stimulates the auditory nerve. As cochlear implants are becoming more effective they are becoming more popular. The FAA has learned of instances in which people believed manufacturers of cochlear implants have issued warnings that using a cochlear implant on an aircraft may violate FAA regulations, and that a user is therefore required to turn the device off during flight operations. Every manufacturer contacted by the FAA has denied issuing any such warning.

Discussion: The FAA has determined that a cochlear implant is a hearing aid as defined by the Federal Food and Drug Administration and is therefore exempt from restrictions on portable electronic devices. That exemption is explicitly stated in existing rules, namely Title 14 of the Code of Federal Regulations (14 CFR) part 91, § 91.21(b); part 121, § 121.306(b); part 125, § 125.204(b); and part 135, § 135.144(b).

Recommended Action: Directors of safety, directors of operations, managers and trainers of ground-based passenger service agents and crewmembers, flight attendants and pilots should bear in mind that government and industry are committed to making air travel as easy as possible for people with disabilities. They should be aware of the growing popularity of cochlear implants and of the FAA determination permitting their use during flight operations.

More information regarding the appearance and function of cochlear implants may be found at a number of public web sites, including: <http://www.fda.gov/cdrh/cochlear/index.html>.