By Andrea Sachs
The Washington Post

NEW GROUND RULES FOR SMART LUGGAGE

The rule came earlier than expected. The International Civil Aviation Organization, the UN agency that sets aviation safety standards and recommends practices for more than 190 countries, had decided to start restricting smart luggage next January. However, the International Air Transport Association, which represents about 275 airlines worldwide, instituted the ban by the New Year.

Airlines including American, Alaska, Hawaiian, Delta, United, and Southwest no longer allow passengers to fly with smart bags that contain non-rechargeable lithium batteries. The policy change applies to checked and carry-on bags that require lithium batteries to power high-tech features such as a USB charging station and a location tracker.

Many travelers who travel with a smart bag must be able to remove the battery in the case bag to have it checked at any point in the customer’s journey,” American Airlines said in a statement. “If the battery cannot be removed, the bag must be transported as checked luggage.”

The rule springs from safety concerns. Lithium metal and lithium-ion polymer batteries are susceptible to emitting smoke, catching fire, and even exploding. Between March 1991 and May 2017, the Federal Aviation Administration documented 160 incidents involving lithium batteries that were being transported as cargo or luggage. The agency already prohibits passengers from checking more than one lithium battery in a carry-on bag. The new policy extends the restriction to checked luggage.

The airlines are not snubbing all smart bags: Luggage technologies that also include major carriers such as United, JetBlue, KLM, and Aer Lingus. IATA spokesmen said the organization’s members would follow their recommendations starting Jan. 15. Participants include major carriers such as United, JetBlue, KLM, and Virgin Atlantic, as well as many smaller airlines, including Norwegian Air Shuttle, Airways, Egypt’s Nile Air and Israel’s El Al Airlines.

Consider yourself warned: If you arrive at the airport with the luggage, the airline will not permit you to pass through security. You will have to remove the battery from your secondary bags or purchase new luggage at the airport — a costly solution for a careless mistake.

The Concierge
TIPS FOR TOURING HERE AND ABROAD

TheConcierge
January 26, 2017

HERE

SPN HOTEL DEBUTS IN WEST HARTFORD

Delamar hotel has debuted in Connecticut, adding a West Hartford location to the roster of boutique properties that also include Southport and Greenwich. This new hotel in the Capital Region boasts 114 rooms and suites, full service luxury spa, and a farm-to-table restaurant, Artisan. Take advantage of a series of winter packages such as Winter Weekends, Girls Getaway, Dine, Dance, etc.

The Concierge

NEW GROUND RULES FOR SMART LUGGAGE

SINCE REGIS

MSIA