Customer Advisory, September 25, 2026

Ocean Freight Dangerous Goods

Mandatory battery declaration at time of booking

Dear Customer,

To support the safe, compliant and uninterrupted process of ocean freight shipments, DHL Global Forwarding requires shippers to declare any batteries contained in a consignment at the time of booking. This requirement reflects the industry's increasing focus on battery-related safety risks and supports compliance with carrier, terminal and regulatory requirements for cargo declaration, handling and vessel planning.

Why this matters

Batteries are increasingly used in products shipped worldwide, including consumer electronics, medical devices, industrial equipment and mobility solutions. Even when batteries are not classified as Dangerous Goods (DG), they may still be subject to specific carrier acceptance, handling and stowage requirements. Providing battery information at the time of booking allows carriers and terminals to assess, plan and handle shipments appropriately, supporting safe operations and regulatory compliance throughout the supply chain.

What must be declared

The requirement applies to all shipments containing any type of battery, including:

- All battery types, regardless of chemistry, design or configuration, including but not limited to cells, button cells, battery, battery packs, lithium-ion, lithium metal, sodium-ion, nickel-metal hydride, lead-acid, alkaline and other battery technologies.
- Batteries classified as Dangerous Goods or non-Dangerous Goods
- Batteries packed separately
- Batteries packed with equipment
- Batteries contained in equipment, such as electronics, medical devices, tools, tracking devices, instruments, e-bikes, scooters or other battery-operated equipment
- Batteries contained in devices, such as data loggers, smart sensors or monitoring devices

Shippers may be requested to provide supporting documents for validation, including Safety Data Sheets (SDS), UN38.3 Test Summaries, battery specifications, packing photos and other relevant documents. Missing or incomplete documentation may delay booking acceptance.

Shipper’s responsibilities

Shippers are responsible for providing clear, accurate and complete battery information to DHL Global Forwarding whenever batteries are present in a shipment, regardless of whether the batteries are classified as Dangerous Goods.

We also kindly remind shippers of their responsibility to identify when batteries are regulated as Dangerous Goods under the IMDG Code, including those subject to special provisions or other applicable regulations. Shippers must ensure that Dangerous Goods consignments are packed, marked, labelled, placarded, loaded and secured in accordance with all applicable requirements, including but not limited to the IMDG Code and CTU Code.

Shippers are liable for the consequences of inaccurate or incomplete battery declarations, which may include shipment delays or disruption, additional charges, non-compliance or penalties.

Benefits of early declaration

Early declaration helps ensure shipments are assessed correctly from the outset and supports efficient booking and cargo acceptance processes.

Providing battery information upfront may help shippers benefit from:

- Reduced risk of booking delays or shipment holds
- Fewer last-minute documentation requests
- Improved shipment planning and carrier acceptance
- Greater visibility of applicable transport requirements before cargo handover
- Lower risk of penalties for non-compliance with carrier, terminal or regulatory requirements

How DHL Global Forwarding supports you

Our specialists are available to help you identify the information or documentation that may be required for your shipments.

Working closely with carriers, terminals and regulatory stakeholders, DHL Global Forwarding helps customers navigate evolving industry requirements while supporting the safe, compliant and efficient transportation of their cargo.

If you have any questions or require support with your shipment booking, please contact your DHL Global Forwarding representative.

Thank you for your cooperation.

Kind regards,

DHL Global Forwarding