

## AIR TRAVEL WITH CARTRDIGES

(Terry Castle)

### So you wish to carry cartridges, do you?

#### Or a travellers guide for the cartridge collector on how to get it right.

Most cartridge collectors at some stage in their lives will wish to travel (most probably by air) and what better than to meet fellow cartridge collectors in other parts of the World. Along with the trip is the opportunity to 'shoot' (if you will pardon the pun) tall stories, exchange fact and fiction on those rare and scarce cartridges somewhere "out there". Hopefully, one will be able pick up some desirable item that has been on the 'wants list' for ages and is now obtainable in a different country, where, guess what? they are not that rare at all! Doesn't Murphy's Law just have that particular quirk of nature? Dreams are one thing and reality is another. All cartridge collectors, wherever they live in the World, should by now be well aware that life for any air commuting passenger come John or Jane Doe has forever changed since September 11 2001.

Can one carry cartridges by air overseas, or for that matter, within one's own Country? Knees tremble whilst at the same time mental images (hopefully unexperienced) of graphic strip searches in grubby little offices or cubicles at various air passenger terminals flit through one's mind. "It of course can not happen to me" so the mind says. "It just has to be the other bloke. Heck I am just an ordinary law abiding citizen who has a different hobby. I'm not a ruddy drug smuggler for heaven's sake. Me, committing a crime or an offence? You have just got to be joking! I am just pursuing my hobby and not offending anyone." Well do we have news for you, not all of it bad dare I say. But look, listen and a word to the wise.

Just about any airline that you can think of, and a host that you have never heard of, are signatories to the IATA (International Aviation Transport Association) Dangerous Goods Regulations (currently in its 2010 - 51st edition). This weighty document of over 1,000 pages is prepared by IATA principally in Canada with the intent of giving guidance and laying down procedure and minimum requirements to companies who specialise in preparing hazardous air cargo for shipment by air. Knowledge of these Regulations to the Cartridge Collector in fact is not lengthy if just travelling with a suitcase and is initially summed up as follows:

*We go to Page 14; section 2.3.2 Goods Acceptable with Operator Approval, as Checked Baggage Only.*

*2.3.2.1 Ammunition: Securely packaged ammunition (cartridges for weapons, small arms) in Division 1.4S, (UN 0012 or UN 0014 only), in quantities not exceeding 5 Kg (11 lb) gross weight per person for that person's own use, excluding ammunition with explosive or incendiary projectiles. Allowances for more than one passenger must not be combined into one or more packages.*

Two matters of note exist here. Firstly the term 'sporting ammunition' or 'for sporting purpose' has been dropped and secondly there IS NO requirement for original packaging. The matter of original packaging has been erroneously bandied about for a long time, but in reality there has been no such requirement for a very long time.

Now let us go firstly to Table 2.3.A, page 14 of these Regulations to see who in authority needs to know what. This is the "Provision for Dangerous Goods Carried by Passengers or Crew.

We read:

*Ammunition (cartridges for weapons), securely packaged (in Div. 1.4S, UN 0012 or UN 0014 only), in quantities not exceeding 5 Kg (11 lb) gross weight per person for that person's own use, excluding ammunition with explosive or incendiary projectiles. Allowances for more than one passenger must not be combined into one or more packages.*

Pretty much a repeat of what we have already learnt at section 2.3.2.1

Permitted in carry on baggage: NO

Permitted in or as checked baggage: YES

Permitted on ones' person: NO

The approval of the operator(s) is required: YES

The pilot in command must be informed of the location: NO

So the first sigh of relief is heard! But wait, what is this bit about Division 1.4S and these 2 UN (United Nations) numbers? So one delves deeper, and in doing so, we are now entering the realm of the Regulations that are specifically intended to apply to air cargo, ie freight of which we will learn a little more later. Nonetheless we need definitions so as to give us a clear understanding and from now on we learn where we will find them. It should go without saying that if you are prohibited from shipping items by air cargo then one sure as heck is not going to be allowed to pack them into one's suitcase!

Next to look at on page 51 is the daunting list of Airlines who have made additional requirements, exclusions and or prohibitions. This section is termed "List of Operator Variations".

This is far too lengthy to go into here BUT BE AWARE that many airlines (and there will be more in the future) have set in place their own requirements and these can specifically exclude the carriage of ammunition REGARDLESS of what the IATA DG Regulations say. Any airline may have its own policy in place that exceeds the requirements of the IATA DG Regs, but no airline can make or allow requirements that are lesser than the Dangerous Goods Regulations. Hence it is essential that a collector checks well in advance with the airline of his or her choice, well before (up to 2 weeks minimum is recommended) arriving at an airport with the intentions of flying with cartridges packed within checked baggage.

We move now to Section 3 – Classification, on page 89 of the Regulations.

3.0.2 – Hazard Classes: *“Some hazard classes are further subdivided into hazard divisions due to the wide scope of the class. The nine hazard classes and their divisions are listed below. The order in which they are numbered is for convenience and does not imply a relative degree of danger*

3.0.2.1 Defines the Hazard Classes, in this case Class 1 – Explosives and we read

Division 1.4 – Articles and substances presenting no significant hazard.

At section 3.1.2 - Description: we read that “Explosive articles and substances are assigned to one of six divisions and to one of thirteen compatibility groups. Not all compatibility groups are to be found in a division”.

Notes. 1. Only explosives in Division 1.4 compatibility group S are permitted on a passenger aircraft.

Under 3.1.3.4 Division 1.4 we see and read the following, which in fact gives THE DEFINITION of the letter S:

*“Articles and substances that present no significant hazard. This division comprises articles and substances, which present only a small hazard in the event of ignition or initiation during transport. The effects are largely confined to the package and no projection of fragments of appreciable size or range is to be expected. An external fire must not cause virtually instantaneous explosion of almost the entire contents of the package”.*

*“Note: Articles and substances in this division are placed in Compatibility Group S when they are so packed or designed that any hazardous effects arising from accidental functioning are confined within the package unless the package has been degraded by fire, in which case all blast or projection effects are limited to the extent that they do not significantly hinder fire-fighting or other emergency response efforts in the immediate vicinity of the package.”*

We then note sections 3.1.4 under Compatibility Groups and this goes on to include section 3.1.4.1 to 3.1.4.3. Here is quite detailed stuff, more relevant to the Dangerous Goods Handler/Shipper/Consigner. However, if you are packing ammunition for air shipment it would pay to source this detail out first.

We now have the definition/significance of the S after 1.4 which is further repeated in Table 3.1.A on page 92 – Compatibility Group For Explosives. It repeats and elaborates on the detail regarding S - *“Articles and substance so packed or designed that any hazardous effects arising from accidental functioning are confined within the package unless the package has been degraded by fire, in which case all blast or projection effects are limited to the extent that they do not significantly hinder or prohibit fire fighting or other emergency response efforts in the immediate vicinity of the package*

So now brimming with new found knowledge we proceed to pack our container which, in this case, will be going into the suitcase. Packing for airfreight is a totally different matter and may or may not be allowed by the Dangerous Goods Handler.

BUT ONE MOMENT. What in fact constitutes ammunition, for here we come upon a very considerable anomaly? For this detail we go to Appendix A of the Regs and in looking up the word ‘Ammunition’ on page 705 we find that we are looking at detail regarding generic terms more suited to items of warfare; “grenades, rockets, mines, projectiles and other similar devices or contrivances”.

In essence ALL Ammunition is totally forbidden on any Passenger Aircraft, always. ‘Cartridges’ however ARE NOT. It does not pay to get into the semantics of this issue, but it is important to remember this gem of knowledge.

So changing tack we proceed to page 709 where we find the definition for CARTRIDGES SMALL ARMS, which is what we want and where we yet again find the term ‘ammunition’ associated with or incorporated with that of ‘cartridges’. If you are not confused by now, you should be.

*“Ammunition consisting of a cartridge case fitted with a centre or rimfire primer and containing both a propelling charge and solid projectile(s). They are designed to be fired in weapons of calibre not larger than 19.1 mm. Shotgun cartridges of any calibre are included in this definition. The term excludes Cartridges, small arms, blank which are listed separately and some small arms cartridges which are listed under Cartridges for weapons, inert projectile”.*

There are definitions for other ‘cartridges’ listed here, but let us stick with matters relating to our hobby. This section should however be checked if one is shipping such as ‘blanks’, ‘power devices’, ‘flash’ etc.

Moving on we come to a section of Blue pages and titled: (section) 4.2 List of Dangerous Goods, on page 141. This is the designated list of shipping instructions.

Pages 150 and 151 detail requirements for ammunition (yes you guessed it, as against cartridges!) and includes such as ammunition incendiary, ammunition smoke, ammunition tear-producing, ammunition smoke white phosphorous etc. All of these forms of ammunition are totally forbidden on passenger aircraft and many are forbidden on cargo aircraft. In essence all of this ammunition relates to ammunition without an inert projectile.

We go on to pages 167, 168 and 169, This section deals with sending cartridges as cargo or freight, but it is far from irrelevant to the cartridge collector as the UN ID (identification number) and considerable other detail is given that still impacts on cartridges/ammunition carried as checked baggage.

We see Classes and or Divisions relating to ammunition which have now suddenly become cartridges. This section gives us details that we are trying to locate, i.e. the UN (United Nations) numbers. We are looking for Class or Division 1.4S, UN 0012 which will be the most relevant: *Cartridges for Weapons, inert projectile*.

UN 0014 is also indicated and it includes *Cartridges, small arms, blank*.

We see a daunting list of 34 different types of Cartridges and their Shipping Names/Descriptions, with the word FORBIDDEN below the Passenger aircraft section. In essence To reiterate: NO cartridges or ammunition of any type are permitted to be sent as cargo / freight on a Passenger Aircraft. Multiple types of cartridges are permitted to be freighted on cargo aircraft, in some instances up to 100kg per lot, but far from all are permitted and should you be shipping cartridges by air, this section needs to be thoroughly checked.

Of extreme relevance is the number 130 located in the Packing Instruction column. This relates to freighting items (as unaccompanied cargo) but again in general, if safe to freight, then it is also probably safe to transport within a suitcase. So looking up packing Instruction 130 on page 343 it says, well quite a lot to be frank and does not even mention UN 0012 or UN 0014. It does however indicate boxes and drums and that they can be constructed of such as aluminium, wood, plywood, reconstituted wood, fibreboard, plastic and steel.

One must move forward to section 6.2 of the DG Regulations as of page 536 – This provides the specifications for ‘Outer Single and Composite Packagings’ and gives us the details regarding the various types of containers indicated above. This is too detailed to reproduce here but will be available upon request. If you are shipping as cargo your Dangerous Goods Handler will have all the details. Suffice to say, in doubt make an inquiry and if not, go the extra mile in making the suitcase container as robust as possible and made of one or more of the above components. The long and the short of it is that containers of any of the above indicated construction are suitable to ship cartridges in, be it a passenger plane as checked baggage or a cargo plane. Freight containers however must be made to very stringent (Drop Test) specifications and ONLY a Dangerous Goods Handler should provide these containers.

Such a container for your suitcase must be packed securely and it must contain only UN 0012 or UN 0014.

If we are going to hold our own on technical talk (it is called CREDIBILITY) with any person employed on security at airports, be they Customs Officers, Police or others such as airline officials, it pays to know as much as possible about what we are collecting and what we are conveying.

And then what do we have here in our secure container within our suitcase but:

*Cartridges for weapons, inert projectile*

*UN (United Nations number) 0012.*

*Maximum gross quantity of cartridges per package: 5.0kg*

For freighting (and still applies for you anyway) they will be

*Hazard Division: 1.4*

*Compatibility Group S.*

*Hazard label: Explosive 1.4.*

*Passenger and Cargo Aircraft packing Instruction: 130.*

As also applies to UN 0014: Cartridges for small arms blank.

Of very considerable significance is the fact that the black and orange IATA Dangerous Goods Label used by hazardous substances shipping companies showing 1.4S IS NEVER intended under any circumstance to be put on the exterior of your suitcase or container of cartridges that is to go into your suitcase. Make sure that this NEVER happens as you will cause a security alert should you ever do so.

One bears in mind that a lot of the above relates to shipping as cargo, not in one’s suitcase. However again, if you can NOT ship it as cargo then you sure as heck are not going to be able to place it in your suitcase! So there is reciprocal relevance here.

We are now believe it or not, well on our way to understanding what we can and can not put in our little 5.00 Kg shipment within our suitcase.

"What" it could be asked "*is wrong with a few cartridges wrapped up in a couple of plastic bags then stuffed into an old jersey or two within the suitcase?*". Safe as houses one would think. But Uh hu! Not in this day and age. Nor what the airport official would see as acceptable and on the 'almost certain to be confiscated list', plus you will stand a high probability of the airline concerned refusing to carry you.

We can now see that we may take in our suitcase, correctly packed:

1. All cartridges (the acceptable term to use) that have one or more (remember multi-ball cartridges or shot shells) projectiles that are not larger than 19.1 mm in diameter or calibre (and that do not fall into the prohibited schedule), on the basis that they are most likely (although they do not have to be any longer) sporting cartridges with inert projectiles. It is quite factual to indicate that virtually any calibre has been used for sporting purposes at one time or the other, this matter being left up to the individual concerned at the time.
2. That the airline concerned must give its consent (IN WRITING preferably for your and others peace of mind) prior to the air trip taking place. This consent is best initiated by YOU contacting the specific airline's 'Operations Manager' in writing at the airport that is your first leaving point. Your query may well be passed down the line, but it is strongly recommended that you write to this person initially by e-mail or letter, requesting the airline's consent and assistance. You will probably get both if you make the right approach. Should you be travelling with your partner and 14 children, the IATA Dangerous Goods Regulations allow for the carriage of a maximum of 5.00kg of (UN 0012 or UN 0014) cartridges per passenger. How you explain that your 5 month old daughter and or 2 year old son is a cartridge collector is a matter entirely left up to you!
3. There has been an erroneous misunderstanding with some in the past that a passenger may carry 5.00kg of cartridges in each suitcase that the passenger has with him or her. This matter is completely inaccurate and is a direct breach of the IATA DG Regulations.
4. That you know that the gross weight of the cartridges should not exceed 5.00kg or 11 lbs. You may well be asked to sign a black and red document and that contains a similarly coloured luggage tag. This signed luggage tag will be attached to your suitcase (and is easily locatable by airline and baggage handling staff) and it is a declaration that you have done all necessary paperwork before travelling, permits etc and that you are not exceeding the 5.0kg limit.
5. That the container be made of one of the acceptable materials listed above. The author has a large pressed metal biscuit tin that is perhaps more travelled than the average space shuttle! Lined with bubble wrap and filled with cartridges each of which is individually wrapped in toilet tissue to prevent contact between cartridges, then internal loose spaces being filled with tissues or plastic bags; this has always in the past been found acceptable by the airline and security staff concerned. The lid needs to be sealed down and such as ducting tape is recommended, with a part roll in the suitcase with a pair of nail scissors included. If required to open the tin for inspection you then have the immediate means to reseal it.
6. That the cartridges/projectiles should not fall within the definition of "forbidden", i.e. the case containing explosive or incendiary projectiles etc. You are of course aware that Cartridges with 'Inert Projectile' are acceptable, so best stick with that.
7. Remember that you are or should be carrying or wish to take with you UN 0012 Cartridges for weapons, inert projectile(s), Class 1.4 S. You may or may not wish to add that these are sporting cartridges or obsolete collectors cartridges.
8. You can expect the suitcase to be x-rayed more than once on its travel. If queried about cartridges in your suitcase then have the right answer and have the right paperwork. Airports have regular 'explosive sniffer dogs' at work in this day and age, so be aware. You may bet your last cent that should a well-trained dog go near your suitcase it will pick up the scent of propellant. Be prepared for a good explanation. Should you have been reloading or dumping out propellant the previous day and have got some trace of propellant on your clothing or shoes, look out again, as if your clothing is 'swab tested' and reads positive for explosives you will be in for an eventful time. This is where that letter of acknowledgment and affirmation back from your airline before you flew, can be Godsend.
9. It is not the intent to delve into the matter of freighting or consigning cartridges by air cargo although there are some matters which inextricably overlap with the 5.0kg in the suitcase on a passenger aircraft. However to touch most briefly on this subject of air freighting, it has to be understood that the gross weight of a carton, box, bin or tin is in fact not that relevant, 'though of course there is an upper limit for each package. What is of utmost importance is the gross weight of the propellant within each carton being declared. Hence on average a 10kg sealed all up carton built and made to required "drop test" specifications for freighting UN 0012 or UN 0014 may well only contain perhaps 0.834kg of propellant. This is the part that really matters and that is essential in being declared to the shipping agent, who is going to consign your treasures as freight. They must know the total weight of propellant, expressed in metric units within each container. We are getting a bit technical here and could well get more so, but let us stick to the issue at hand of cartridges within suitcases.
10. A new matter has come to light and this is one of the most relevant sections of this entire document. Many airlines now have to apply to fly through or over the airspace of other countries, China is one. Where the airplane concerned is going to be carrying ammunition or firearms the airline concerned must seek permission (if required to do so) of the country concerned, prior to overflying. Any person flying with cartridges should enquire from their airline a minimum of two weeks before flying, to check whether or not any country that the plane is landing in (even if you are only "in

transit”) has a blanket ban on ammunition coming into or flying over that country. Failure to do this may well result in an airline refusing to carry your cartridges at the time that you check in.

So dear fellow collector, matters are not as they once were. Such trivials as import and export permits from the country of destination or arrival can now also rear their head. If in doubt make inquiry first from someone who has the correct answers. If you have no knowledge of Singapore or Zimbabwe and their requirements then I can assure the reader that they will receive a form of accommodation that they did not expect if they are found with cartridges/ammunition, having touched down in said country. There are other Countries that have or will in the future have these same policies.

Beyond all else bear in mind that the mistakes that you make and the rules that you break will not only effect you at the time, but with considerable probability, those genuine and honest cartridge collectors who follow on after you. And they may well not thank you for something that you once did and that they are paying the penalty for later. The old adage applies – “it just takes one to ruin it for everyone else!”

Safe and happy travelling and may our hobby endure.