

# SAFETY ALERT BULLETIN

NUMBERS: SA17-11  
 STATION: Multiple  
 INCIDENT DATE: Multiple

## Loading Battery Powered Wheelchairs

On arrival, the ramp crew discovered a spillable battery operated wheelchair on its side with battery acid leaking in the F2 compartment. Aircraft maintenance took the aircraft out of service due to the spill.

**Required measures for the shipment of battery-powered wheelchairs include the following:**

1. Perform a visual inspection of each battery for damage or leakage.  
 CAUTION: A LEAKING BATTERY MAY NOT BE ACCEPTABLE FOR TRANSPORT AND WHEN SPILLAGE HAS OCCURRED, REQUIRES ASSESSMENT AND CLEAN-UP AS OUTLINED IN THE SAFETY SECURITY AND ENVIRONMENTAL MANUAL.
2. Ensure the battery is securely contained in or attached to the storage compartment.
3. Verify the wheelchair has been properly de-powered (battery disconnected).
4. Ensure all quick-disconnect cable connectors or battery terminals (when not equipped with quick-disconnect connectors) are fully covered with non-conductive tape.

NOTE: All spillable batteries should be removed from the wheelchair.

**Loading**

If a battery powered mobility device can be loaded, stored, secured, and unloaded in an upright position, the battery should be left on the device. Due to the aircraft types in our fleet (Specifically the MD80, and regional aircraft), the size of the cargo doors, and the incline of the conveyor belt when loading these items, this will rarely be possible.



**Spillable Batteries**

Spillable batteries that cannot be loaded, stored, secured, and unloaded in an upright position must be detached from the wheelchair and properly packaged in an approved battery box by customer or freight personnel. The wheelchair and battery (box) must always be transported on the same flight within the same compartment.



*Resource Citation: Ramp Operations Manual (ROM)*

*Section 4-8-2 Wheelchair Batteries*

*“Non-spillable batteries are not to be removed from a battery-powered wheelchair. Any battery that does not contain a corresponding label by the manufacturer will be considered “spillable.” Hand-written labeling or labeling that appears “home-made” is not acceptable and will require enforcement of spillable-battery procedures.”*

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**For questions or comments, please contact your Hub or Regional Corporate Safety Manager.**

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May 6, 2017