

Recommendation

on Test Summaries for Lithium Cells and Batteries
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In 2017 the UN Manual of Tests and Criteria (Document ST/SG/AC.10/11/Rev.6) was supplemented with subsection 38.3.5 “Lithium cell and battery test summary”. This subsection pushed the international regulatory bodies to add the requirement to the international transport regulations for dangerous goods. Accordingly, from January 1, 2020 onwards manufacturers and distributors of lithium cells and batteries that were produced after June 30, 2003, must provide a test summary pursuant to the UN Manual of Tests and Criteria, Subsection 38.3.5. In this subsection the information required to be included in a test summary is listed.

The international experts and the governmental authorities at the UN Subcommittee of Experts on the Transport of Dangerous Goods that were involved in the discussion and in the creation of the test summary requirement never intended nor communicated this to be an additional mandatory transport document. Moreover, the actual wording chosen, “upon request”, suggests clearly the opposite. This means the test summaries do not have to be sent in advance to the parties involved in the transportation, nor do they have to accompany the shipment itself, instead they only **must be made available upon request**. There are various ways of doing this (e.g. website, telephone number, information requests along the supply chain, reference to the manufacturer’s certificate, etc.). There is **also no obligation for a test summary to accompany the goods along the supply chain**. Nonetheless, for classification/identification, for checks, or in any case of unclarity, shippers, authorities, dispatchers, customers, etc. have the **option** of approaching the distributors and manufacturers at any time to **request and obtain the relevant test summary**.

Conclusion: Transportation of a lithium battery is therefore legally possible even if a test summary is not physically included in the shipment.

Even before the new regulation came into force on January 1, 2020, transportation of lithium cells and batteries was already required to satisfy the conditions set out in subsection 38.3 of the UN Manual of Tests and Criteria. The only exceptions are small series (of max. 100 pieces) and lithium batteries for disposal or recycling, which must be specifically declared and packaged accordingly (transport pursuant to Special Provision 310). The VDA’s member companies and the suppliers in the automotive industry have always fulfilled these requirements. Upon request, test summaries will be provided to the companies involved in transportation for plausibility checks. However, the VDA’s member companies, in line with the view of German federal and state-level ministries and of many firms in the transport business, do **not** see the new requirement under subsection 38.3.5 of the UN Manual of Tests and Criteria as an **obligation on manufacturers and distributors to supply such documents in advance**.

Links and further information:

https://www.lba.de/SharedDocs/Downloads/DE/B/B32_Gefahrgut/Fachinformation_neu/B32_Transport_Zellen.pdf?__blob=publicationFile&v=2

<https://www.phmsa.dot.gov/sites/phmsa.dot.gov/files/docs/training/hazmat/71126/us-dot-testsummarybrochure.pdf>

<https://www.iata.org/contentassets/05e6d8742b0047259bf3a700bc9d42b9/lithium-battery-guidance-document-2020.pdf>