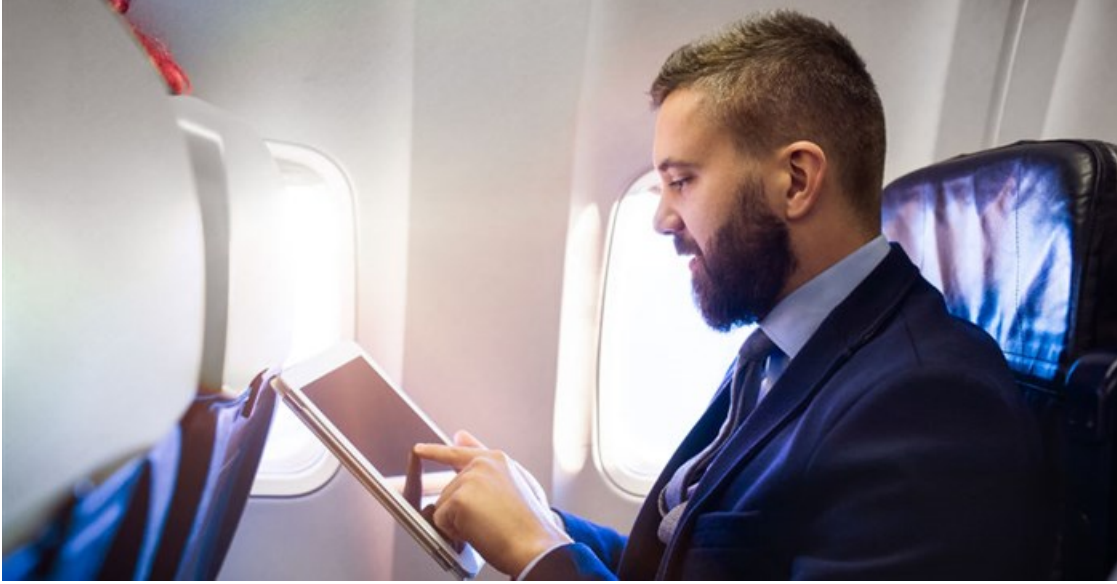


Ban on electronic devices will affect SA travellers

Following a US and UK government ban on electronic devices on flights, South Africans travelling to the UK and USA via Dubai, Abu Dhabi, Cairo, Doha and several other cities will no longer be allowed to use their laptops, iPads, tablets, kindles or e-readers inflight. The ban comes into effect on 25 March 2017 for people travelling to the US and immediately for people travelling to the UK.



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Corporate Traveller has warned that South Africans travelling to the US via Dubai and Abu Dhabi (UAE), Cairo (Egypt), Istanbul (Turkey), Doha (Qatar), Amman (Jordan), Kuwait City (Kuwait), Casablanca (Morocco), Jeddah and Riyadh (Saudi Arabia) will not be allowed to stow any electronic device larger than 16cm x 9.3cm in their hand luggage in terms of a ban announced by the US government.

Business travellers with a direct flight to the UK from Egypt, Jordan, Lebanon, Saudi Arabia, Tunisia, and Turkey are also banned from carrying electronic devices larger than 16cm x 9.3cm in their hand luggage. They have to stow it in their checked baggage.

The US and UK implemented the ban amid fears that terror groups have developed the capability to hide a bomb in a laptop big enough to blow a hole in the side of a plane. Affected airlines include Emirates, Etihad, Qatar Airways, Egypt Air and Turkish Airlines.

Travellers to stow devices in checked baggage

Michelle Jolley, corporate brands marketing leader for Flight Centre Travel Group, says the ban affects South Africans who are transiting via the identified cities.

“It affects direct flights from these cities. A direct flight is any flight that operates as a single flight number from one of the listed ports to the US or UK. That means that South Africans who transit in these ports will be affected even though the flight originated from South Africa. For example, a customer travelling from Johannesburg who is transiting in Dubai will be subject to the ban because although they are changing aircraft in Dubai, their luggage will transfer automatically. They, therefore, have to stow any electronic devices, other than smartphones or cellphones which conform to the dimensions, in their checked baggage from Johannesburg as while electronic devices will be permitted on their flight to Dubai, it will be banned on their flight from Dubai to the US,” she says.

She advises business travellers who do not intend to check-in luggage, or who need to work on the flight and require their laptop or Ipad, to change their route or carrier or take paperwork on board.

Fragile, valuable luggage

Jolley says affected devices include all tablets, iPads, Kindles, e-readers, laptops, cameras and lenses, portable DVD players, electronic game devices and travel printers and scanners larger than 16cm x 9.3cm.

Jolley advises people who are worried about stowing their electronic devices in their checked baggage to contact their airline. “We know that travellers have for years been advised not to put any valuables in their checked baggage, but this ban obviously changes the playing field. We strongly advise travellers who are travelling to the US or UK on affected routes or carriers to wrap their luggage before checking it in or to take the necessary precautions to ensure that their checked baggage cannot be tampered with. They also need to ensure that they have travel insurance in the event that any of their electronic devices are stolen from their checked baggage,” she advises.

You can also ask the airline to put a ‘fragile’ sticker on your bag to prevent it being thrown around. Jolley also advises travellers to contact their airline to discuss the policy that lithium batteries not be transported in the hold.

“The airlines are responsible for enforcing these rules and, therefore, have the final say. One carrier may have a slightly different interpretation to another so it is vital that passengers contact airlines directly or your travel expert for clarification. Flight Centre Travel Group is also liaising with airlines to get clarity,” says Jolley.

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