



Australian Government

**Department of Transport
and Regional Services**



GUIDANCE PAPER ON

**Carriage of Prohibited Items
by People Suffering from
Bona Fide Medical Conditions**

March 2006



People with legitimate medical conditions may carry some prohibited items

What are prohibited items?

Prohibited items¹ are items that are not allowed to be carried in the cabin of an aircraft operating a prescribed air service², airside security zone (security restricted area), or in a landside security zone (sterile area) at airports. Some prohibited items may be carried if the item is medically necessary for the person or a person in their care and they show a medical certificate to that effect. Hypodermic needles are not prohibited items if the person carrying them shows proof that the needles are medically necessary for the person, or a person in their care.

Who may need prohibited items for medical reasons?

Some people are medically required to use items that may be considered to be prohibited items, as part of the treatment for a medical condition. These items may include hypodermic needles.

Hypodermic needles may be carried through screening points and into sterile areas and the cabin of an aircraft, provided the person carrying these items, or their carer, shows to the screener or airline representative (but not necessarily both) proof that the item is medically necessary for themselves or a person in their care. For unscreened air services, including some non-jet domestic air services, the passenger should show their proof and items to an airline representative. Hypodermic needles may be required by people who are being treated for the following conditions (NB: listed conditions are examples only. This list is not exhaustive):

- diabetes
- multiple sclerosis
- severe allergic reactions
- in vitro fertilisation (IVF)

Carriage of other medical items that may be considered prohibited items, e.g. a lancet, is authorised by the

Hypodermic needles may be carried through screening points and into sterile areas and the cabin of an aircraft, provided the person carrying these items show proof that the item is medically necessary.

Use sensitivity when screening

People being treated for medical conditions should be dealt with in a discreet and dignified manner and the use of private screening rooms, where available, may be appropriate.



Aviation Transport Security Regulations 2005 if the person, or their carer, shows a medical certificate to verify that the item is medically necessary for treating the person.

What passes as proof?

A letter from the person's doctor stating that certain implements are medically necessary for a person would be sufficient proof, as is a medical certificate issued by a medical practitioner (e.g. doctor, hospital or clinic) stating that a person suffers from a medical condition and that the prohibited item is medically necessary for their treatment. For people with diabetes, holding a National Diabetes Services Scheme (NDSS) card is sufficient proof that a hypodermic needle is medically necessary. A copy of the current card is reproduced here but be aware that older, still valid, NDSS cards remain in circulation.

Is photographic identification also required?

Photographic identification, to verify that the person producing the certificate is the person named on the certificate, is not required by the legislation. Screening officers or airline representatives may however request identification if this is a necessary part of obtaining proof of a medical condition.

Sensitivity and discretion

Screening officers and airline representatives are requested to respect the dignity of people who are being treated for medical conditions, or who have an implanted medical device (such as pacemakers, morphine pumps, titanium joints etc.). People being treated for medical conditions should be dealt with in a discreet and respectful manner and the use of private screening rooms, where available, may be appropriate.

If it is necessary to establish the proof that a hypodermic needle is medically required by the person travelling, screening officers may also observe the kind of medication and equipment that a person is presenting at the screening point.



For people with diabetes, holding a National Diabetes Services Scheme (NDSS) card is sufficient proof that a hypodermic needle is medically necessary.

Examples of prohibited items that may be carried for medical reasons



Some people with diabetes manage their condition through the use of an insulin pump.



Examples of fixed-needle syringes.



Vials or cartridges of medicine may be carried to fill syringes.

Insulin pumps

Some people with diabetes manage their condition through the use of an insulin pump.

The electronic pump (which is not a prohibited item) is attached to external clothing with the plastic tube (catheter) delivering insulin via a small hypodermic needle (cannula) inserted into the abdomen.

Screening procedures require screeners to ask the person to identify the area where the device is located, and to advise the person that the device must be inspected. A visual inspection of the device should then be undertaken, but a screening officer must not ask the person to remove the device.

Syringes and needles

There are several varieties of syringes including the single use, fixed-needle type and syringes that allow a change of needle for reuse.

Some people carry several hypodermic needles to cover contingencies such as flight delays, lost luggage etc. The legislation does not prescribe any limit on the number of hypodermic needles that may be carried by a person if they are medically necessary.

Vials or cartridges

Vials or cartridges of medicine may be carried to fill the syringe. These are not prohibited items and possession of these medicines may assist in establishing that possession of a hypodermic needle is medically necessary. They can look like the examples shown here.

Pens and needles

A “pen” can be used to deliver medicine via a hypodermic needle, in a similar way to a syringe. A pen is generally not disposable like a syringe, and would be accompanied by medication refills similar to the examples shown here.

be carried for medical reasons

Pens are commonly used by people with diabetes, and may also be carried by people who are prone to severe allergic reactions. An example of a pen showing the needle, as well as some replacement needles is shown here.

Lancets

Lancets are very small sharp objects that are used to make tiny incisions in the fingertip for blood testing. Lancets are not hypodermic needles and authorised possession of these objects through a screening point, in a sterile area, or on board a prescribed aircraft requires that a medical certificate be shown. These devices are often carried by people with diabetes to ascertain their blood glucose level. Lancets are often mounted in pen-like devices.

Notes:

1. Prohibited items are defined in regulation 1.07 (see table 1.07 for examples) of the Aviation Transport Security Regulations 2005
2. Prescribed air services are defined in regulation 1.06 of the Aviation Transport Security Regulations 2005
3. Refer also to regulations 4.62, 4.64 and 4.65 of the Aviation Transport Security Regulations 2005
4. All pictures are examples only and actual items may vary in design.

The Guidance Paper is provided for general information only and that while care has been taken by the Office of Transport Security in preparing the information the Commonwealth accepts no liability for use of, or reliance on, the information. Before relying on the information aviation industry participants should seek independent advice, including legal advice.

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There is a variety of pens available, some examples are shown here.



Some examples of lancets are shown here.



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