

Portable Electronic Devices – Frequently Asked Questions

Which devices are considered Personal Electronic Devices (PED)?

Personal Electronic Devices (PED) include digital cameras, smartphones, tablets, e-readers, etc. The policy issued by the European Aviation Safety Agency (EASA) refers to all PEDs as long as they are not transmitting. That means they are in Airplane Mode or Flight Mode (hereafter Flight Mode). Transmissions such as connection to mobile phone network, Wi-Fi, Bluetooth etc. should be switched off.

What has changed in the policy?

Before this change, the policy stated that passengers could use their PEDs in-flight, but not during taxiing, take-off and landing. The updated policy states that passengers may use PEDs during all phases of the flight, unless flight crew or cabin crew instructs them otherwise.

In my next flight can I use my PEDs in Flight Mode during take-off or landing?

Not necessarily. Safety is always a priority. Under the new policy, once your airline has shown the national civil aviation authority that its aircraft can safely handle interference from portable electronics, they can allow you to use your devices *in Flight Mode only*. At certain times — for example, a landing in reduced visibility — the flight crew may instruct passengers to turn off their devices to make absolutely sure these do not interfere with the aircraft's communications and navigation equipment. The flight crew and cabin crew have the right at any time to restrict use of PEDs according to airline policy.

When does the updated policy come into effect on all flights?

EASA has provided the guidance material how to expand the use of PED's *safely* in all phases of flight. The process to implement this varies among airlines and it is not mandatory that they implement it.

Is it mandatory for an airline to apply the new policy?

No. Any airline may opt for a more restrictive policy on the use of PEDs. Any restrictions on the use of PEDs by passengers that may apply are at the discretion of the airline.

Can the cabin crew or flight crew ask passengers not to use their PEDs?

Yes. Passengers shall at all times follow cabin crew and flight crew instructions.

How will the cabin crew or flight crew ensure all PEDs are in Flight Mode?

A safe flight should be everyone's priority. It may not be feasible for cabin crew or flight crew to physically check that all passengers have switched their devices to Flight Mode. Passengers are obliged to follow cabin crew and flight crew instructions at all times.

Is the new policy safe?

Yes, the new policy is based on analysis performed by experts from all aviation domains, including airlines, aircraft manufacturers, pilot associations and PEDs manufacturers.

Does the new policy apply to all airlines operating in Europe?

The updated EASA policy applies only to European airlines. Foreign (non-European) airlines have to respect the policies and rules of their country's civil aviation authority.

Why does the laptop need to be stowed?

There is no change in this respect: during taxiing, take-off and landing, bulky items such as laptops need to be safely stowed. This is done to prevent injuries in case of abrupt movement of the aircraft and where they would not impede evacuation of aircraft occupants (just as tray tables need to be stowed and seat backs must be upright).

Why the change in the policy?

Passengers expect to use PEDs without restrictions in all modes of transport. Safety remains the priority. Nowadays, the level of interference from modern PEDs, when switched to Flight Mode, is acceptable. Also, almost all aircraft flying today are designed and built to withstand high levels of interference.

Can I use my mobile phone to make calls on-board the aircraft or my PED in transmitting mode?

All restrictions on use of PEDs in transmitting mode (including mobile phones) on-board aircraft continue to apply.

In general, airlines do not allow the use of PEDs in transmitting mode from the time the aircraft doors have closed until the aircraft has arrived at the gate and the doors have opened again. PEDs may only be used in transmitting mode (e.g. WiFi or as mobile phones), if the airline specifically allows this and the aircraft is properly equipped to offer this service.