

## Now It's OK to Use Electronic Devices on Airplanes

Written by Bob Snyder  
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The **European Aviation Safety Agency** (EASA) will publish by the end of November 2013 its guidance which will let you use personal electronic devices (known only in aviation circles by the acronym, “PED”) during all phases of a flight-- as long as the devices are in “Flight Mode” or “Airplane Mode”.

It's a good thing that EASA, with its more than 650 experts and administrators from all over Europe, has finally flown out of Slow Mode on this and finally changed the regulation for the owners of laptops, tablets, smartphones, e-readers and mp3 players.

Current EASA guidance only allows the use of “PED” on aircraft, except during taxi-ing, take-off and landing. The new changes will apply only to aircraft operated by European airlines.

EASA also made a point to say it recognises the wide proliferation of personal electronic devices and the wish of the travelling public to use them everywhere—and it only took 7.3 billion active cell phones to convince this EU body of the need.

Maybe they read about the International Telecommunications Union (ITU) announcement at this year's Mobile World Congress: by 2014, there will be more in-use cell phones than there are people on the planet right now.

In the long term, the Agency says it is looking at new ways to certify the use of mobile phones on-board aircraft to make phone calls. Certify? Yes, they used the word certify which certainly implies something but we have no idea what. But mostly likely it will cost somebody a pretty

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penny or an elegant euro.

The aim, stresses the Agency, is to ensure safe and harmonised use of “PED” on-board aircraft operated by European airlines. (Are you now beginning to hate this acronym as much as we do? C'mon, if you love your devices this makes you a PED-ophile.)

After all, says EASA, safety is our priority. Their press release ends with this admonishment: “...it is important that passengers continue to listen to the safety briefings conducted by the crew and follow their instructions.”

You heard them: To fasten your seat belt, please insert one end into the other until it clicks. Now buckle up.

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