Japan plans WTO complaint on SKorea battery rule

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A lithium-powered radio-controlled helicopter in Tokyo. Japan is set to complain to the WTO this week over a South Korean plan to tighten safety regulations on lithium-ion batteries, accusing Seoul of protectionism, a report has said.

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"We will voice our concern at a committee meeting on technical barriers to trade" at the World Trade Organization this week, Economy, Trade and Industry Minister Toshihiro Nikai was quoted as saying by Jiji Press

news agency.

The committee meets Thursday and Friday in Geneva.

South Korea is reportedly planning to introduce new rules from July 1 on the production and sale of products using lithium-ion batteries, requiring certificates from designated South Korean inspectors.

Foreign manufacturers fear the new process, which comes after some of the batteries have overheated or exploded in recent years, could significantly delay the launch of their products in [South Korea](#).

The certification system could hamper Japanese companies who hold a 60 percent share in the global market of lithium-ion batteries, which are used in electronics including cellphones, digital cameras and laptops.

"The criteria for obtaining certification aren't particularly clear," a Japanese government official was quoted as saying by the Yomiuri Shimbun daily.

"We're worried that Japanese products are basically being kicked out of the South Korean market."

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