

Australian, NZ carriers ban recalled Samsung phone

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Australian and New Zealand airlines barred the recalled Samsung Note 7 from all planes starting Sunday citing its "potential fire risk", after a similar ban was imposed by US officials.

Samsung, the world's largest smartphone maker, has halted production of its latest flagship mobile device and recalled all Note 7 phones and replacements following reports of exploding batteries and fires.

"(The ban) is due to concerns regarding potential fire risk from the device's battery after a number of incidents worldwide and follows a ban put in place by regulators overseas," Qantas and its discount carrier Jetstar said in a statement late Saturday.

"The ban applies to devices being carried onto the aircraft, in carry-on baggage as well as check-in luggage."

Virgin Australia, Tigerair Australia and Air New Zealand issued similar announcements.

Virgin and Air New Zealand "strongly advised" passengers not to bring the Note 7 phone to airports.

"They cannot be accepted for travel and there is no storage facility available for them at our check-in areas," Air New Zealand added.

The Australian carriers previously told customers not to use or charge

the smartphone if they were carrying it onboard flights, after Samsung's initial recall of the "phablet" last month.

US officials Friday barred all Note 7s from airplanes and said anyone attempting to travel with the recalled handsets may face fines and have the devices confiscated.

The Note 7 crisis is set to cost the South Korean electronics giant billions in lost profits, and is a blow to a firm that prides itself on the quality production of cutting-edge technology.

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