

## BUSINESS

# Airline places new limits on power banks

Policy aims to reduce risk of in-flight fires

David Shepardson  
REUTERS

WASHINGTON – Southwest Airlines said on April 7 it will limit passengers to one lithium portable charger on flights and ban them from being stowed in overhead bins to reduce risks of in-flight battery fires.

The new policy on power banks is effective April 20 and Southwest also said portable chargers are no longer allowed

**The FAA said there were 97 battery incidents involving smoke, fire or extreme heat on flights last year, up from 89 in 2024.**

to be recharged using in-seat power.

In March, the United Nations aviation agency – the Montreal-based International Civil Aviation Organization – said the use of power banks, or portable, rechargeable battery packs, would be limited to two per passenger as part of new rules for using the devices while in the air and it prohibited recharging the

power banks during flights.

Airlines such as Lufthansa Group and countries including South Korea had already been introducing restrictions on the use of power banks on flights, following incidents like a fire on an Air Busan plane in 2025.

The ICAO normally sets global standards for aviation that are mostly approved by its 193 member states. The new specifications regarding power banks are effective immediately.

In September, the Federal Aviation Administration issued a safety alert to airlines over risks from lithium batteries in aircraft passenger compartments,

citing numerous serious incidents.

The FAA said there were 97 battery incidents involving smoke, fire or extreme heat on flights last year, up from 89 in 2024.

Southwest said portable power banks must be stored in a passenger's under-seat carry-on or be with them. The airline said its new policy is being implemented "to strengthen our ability to contain and mitigate lithium battery incidents, including reducing the risk of battery fires."

Southwest said by mid-2027 its entire fleet will feature in-seat power, reducing reliance on portable chargers.

# U.S. bank profits set to rise on deals

But Iran war has fueled uncertainty in outlook

Nivedita Balu  
REUTERS

Large U.S. banks are set to post higher quarterly earnings on strong interest income and investment banking fees, analyst estimates show, though investors will focus on forecasts as geopolitical risks involving Iran add to macroeconomic uncertainty.

Goldman Sachs will kick off earnings season for banks on April 13. The largest U.S. lender, JPMorgan Chase, will report on April 14 along with Wells Fargo and Citigroup. Bank of America and Morgan Stanley will report on April 15.

The banks will report results for the three months ending March 31, during which global markets swung as investors grappled with uncertainty tied to wars in the Middle East and Ukraine, volatile oil prices and broader geopolitical risks.

President Donald Trump said on April 7 that he had agreed to a two-week ceasefire with Iran, less than two hours before his deadline for Tehran to reopen the Strait of Hormuz or face widespread attacks on its civilian infrastructure.

Still, several companies sought large mergers and acquisitions before financing conditions changed, leading to bursts of dealmaking and trading activity.

The highlight of the first quarter has been robust dealmaking as nearly two dozen mega deals worth over \$10 billion were reached globally, along with 40 deals valued at over \$5 billion, according to LSEG data. Jefferies analysts noted global M&A proxy fees of \$11.3 billion in the first quarter, led by Goldman.

Another focus on earnings calls will likely be the outlook for 2026 loan growth, especially commercial and industrial and commercial real estate, said Gerard Cassidy, an analyst at RBC Capital Markets.

Federal Reserve data suggests commercial and industrial growth accelerated in the first quarter, but uncertainty regarding the Middle East war and the subsequent rise in oil prices could weigh on the outlook if the conflict is protracted, he said.

In February, JPMorgan Chase said it expects investment banking fees and markets revenue to log strong growth in the first quarter, easing concerns that a recent equity market selloff has hit deal pipelines.

Bank of America expects interest income to grow at least 7% and investment banking fees to climb 10% in the first quarter, its Co-President Dean Athanasia said on March 10.

Citigroup CEO Jane Fraser said in March the bank expects mid-teens percentage growth in its investment banking fees and markets revenue in the first quarter, as the Wall Street bank sees strong activity in both divisions despite escalating global tensions.

Wells Fargo expects loans to grow this year, betting on credit cards and autos while momentum in mortgages will pick up, Chief Financial Officer Mike Santomassimo said in February.



Local business filings and U.S. trademark documents show OneTank is controlled by a representative of Shenzhen Onevape Technology. DANIEL COLE/REUTERS FILE

# ‘Made in America’ vape products gain ground

Filings show some ties to China, Hong Kong

Emma Rumney  
REUTERS

LONDON – The U.S. vaping market, long dominated by Chinese imports, is seeing an uptick of “Made in America” products, in what some analysts and industry executives say is a reaction to the Trump administration’s crackdown on unlicensed brands.

The products suggest the multi-billion-dollar industry is shifting marketing tactics under President Donald Trump’s global trade tariff salvos and a tougher approach to unlicensed vapes from U.S. authorities, especially against popular Chinese labels.

The United States is the world’s top market for vapes, coveted by major tobacco players like British American Tobacco, which estimated the market was worth around \$12 billion in 2024. Most vapes globally are produced in China, and the devices are imported and distributed in the United States often without formal permission from regulators.

Since October last year, at least eight new vape brands playing up their American credentials have appeared among the broad array of unlicensed labels available on U.S. shelves, according to a Reuters analysis. Trademark documents and business filings show some of those eight brands, all of which lack permission for sale in the United States, are controlled by U.S. firms but at least two are Chinese- or Hong Kong-owned.

Pallav Mittal, an analyst at Barclays, said the vape companies appeared to be betting that the move would make their labels less likely to “catch the eyes” of customs officials on the lookout for unlicensed Chinese vapes at the U.S. border.

That could mean the U.S. crackdown on the massive illegal vape market will have an even more gradual impact than major tobacco companies were hoping, he added.

“(If) the illegal players have found another way to stay in the U.S. market ... then this shift from illegal to legal will probably slow down,” Mittal said.

The Food and Drug Administration declined to comment on whether there had been a shift toward U.S. production of vapes, but said it is illegal to sell unauthorized vapes regardless of where they are made.

The website of one brand, Maxus Star, proclaims “Vape American” and shows the device emblazoned with stars, stripes and a “built in the USA” stamp. Reuters could not verify where the device is made.

The “MAXUS” brand is owned in the United States by Hong Kong-based Rivermountain (H.K.) Tech, which also holds trademarks in China for sub-brands of Chinese vape maker Freemax, trademark documents show. Maxus Star, Freemax and Rivermountain did not respond to requests for comment.

Another new label, OneTank, displays a stamp with an American flag and the phrase “made in USA” on its packaging. It is controlled by a representative of Shenzhen Onevape Technology, local business filings and U.S. trademark documents show. OneTank and Shenzhen Onevape Technology did not respond to requests for comment.

Reuters could not establish whether OneTank had any U.S. manufacturing sites.

Some manufacturers could be trialing U.S. production or increasing their use of U.S.-made vape liquids to help lower tariff costs, said Steve Xu, an adjunct assistant professor who follows the industry at Canada’s University of Waterloo.

Small U.S.-based vape company Charlie’s Holdings Inc. in December

opened its first U.S. factory to fill one of its disposable vape brands with e-liquid, citing supply chain disruptions associated with importing finished devices and consumer preference for “Made in America” brands. Its annual report states its disposable vapes are produced by a Chinese manufacturing partner.

### Targeting unlicensed vapes

Unlicensed vapes account for some 70% of U.S. vape sales, according to British American Tobacco, whose own devices have lost market share as a result. The FDA has licensed only 41 vapes for sale.

As it launched a crackdown on unlicensed vapes last year, the Trump administration singled out Chinese devices. Health and Human Services Secretary Robert F. Kennedy Jr. and former Attorney General Pam Bondi said at a major vape seizure that China was profiting from dumping “dangerous” illegal vapes in the United States.

The uptick in “Made in America” vape marketing reflects how U.S. consumers are regularly hearing from the Trump administration that products made in China are bad, said one vape industry consultant who works with Chinese firms. They asked not to be named due to confidentiality agreements.

Some tobacco companies say, without offering evidence, that the marketing trend reflects a pivot by Chinese rivals. Chinese trade data shows no drop-off in vapes exported to the United States from China, with shipments worth over \$4 billion in 2025.

Tadeu Marroco, British American Tobacco’s CEO, said it was part of a move “to get around” state and federal regulations. Some of British American Tobacco’s own products lack FDA licenses.

“As the administration increases enforcement, they get more creative,” Marroco said.