

Japan cracks down on electric rideable suitcases

1st August 2024



The latest advance in suitcase technology is causing problems in Japan. Many suitcases are now rideable. Travellers can sit on them, and travel at a speed of up to 13kph. The motorized luggage is becoming increasingly

popular. However, it is becoming a nuisance in some parts of Japan. More and more people there are riding their suitcases around airports, train stations and Tokyo streets. The problem is that the mobile luggage is classed as a motorized vehicle under Japanese law. This means they can be ridden on roads only. The rider needs a helmet, a driver's license, and insurance. Laws require the suitcases to be registered, and have a rear-view mirror and indicator lights. Airports in Osaka and Nagoya have asked tourists to pull rather than ride the suitcases.

Electric luggage has been around since 2016. Back then, a company called Modobag produced them. The company's slogan was "the carry-on that carries you". In the past year, the rideable luggage has become popular with celebrities. K-pop stars Blackpink, singer Katie Perry, and media personality Paris Hilton have all posted online videos of themselves riding their suitcases. Companies are also trying to make rules for the new way of getting around. British Airways will only allow them on airplanes if the lithium batteries can be removed because the batteries are a fire risk. Kyodo News spoke to transport expert Dr Takeru Shibayama. He said: "Unexpected new forms of transport will continue to emerge." He added that new laws will always be needed.

Sources: kyodonews.net / theguardian.com / msn.com

Writing

We should ban rideable suitcases to keep obesity down.

Chat

Talk about these words from the article.

advance / suitcase / technology / speed / nuisance / airports / laws / helmet / mirror / luggage / slogan / popular / celebrities / stars / online videos / batteries / fire / risk

True / False

- 1) Rideable suitcases can reach speeds of 130kph. T / F
- 2) More people are riding their suitcases on highways in Japan. T / F
- 3) Rideable suitcases riders need a helmet and insurance in Japan. T / F
- 4) An airport in Osaka told people not to ride their rideable suitcases. T / F
- 5) The first rideable suitcases were made six years ago. T / F
- 6) J-pop stars uploaded videos of rideable suitcases on social media. T / F
- 7) British Airways has banned all rideable suitcases from its airplanes. T / F
- 8) An expert said there will be new kinds of transport in the future. T / F

Synonym Match

(The words in **bold** are from the news article.)

- | | |
|--------------------|----------------|
| 1. advance | a. danger |
| 2. luggage | b. need |
| 3. nuisance | c. catchphrase |
| 4. require | d. annoyance |
| 5. ride | e. regulations |
| 6. slogan | f. development |
| 7. popular | g. come out |
| 8. rules | h. well liked |
| 9. risk | i. suitcases |
| 10. emerge | j. sit on |

Discussion – Student A

- a) What do you think of suitcases?
- b) What do you think of rideable suitcases?
- c) How much of a nuisance might rideable suitcases be?
- d) Where would you ride on a rideable suitcase?
- e) Should you need a driver's license to ride a rideable suitcase?
- f) Should rideable suitcases have indicators and a rear-view mirror?
- g) How lazy are we becoming if we have rideable suitcases?
- h) What should the top speed of a rideable suitcase be?

Phrase Match

1. The latest advance
 2. travel at a speed
 3. it is becoming a nuisance in some
 4. classed as a motorized vehicle
 5. have a rear-view
 6. The company's slogan was "the carry-on
 7. rules for the new way
 8. the lithium batteries can
 9. the batteries are
 10. Unexpected new forms of transport
- a. a fire risk
 - b. parts of Japan
 - c. mirror
 - d. of getting around
 - e. will continue to emerge
 - f. of up to 13kph
 - g. be removed
 - h. in suitcase technology
 - i. that carries you"
 - j. under Japanese law

Discussion – Student B

- a) What do you think about what you read?
- b) What do you think of the slogan in the article?
- c) Why would celebrities like rideable suitcases?
- d) What other things in our lives should be rideable?
- e) What do you think of motorized shopping carts in malls?
- f) What rules should there be for rideable suitcases?
- g) What new forms of transport do you think will emerge?
- h) What questions would you like to ask a rideable suitcase maker?

Spelling

1. The latest edacany in suitcase technology
2. rvtsealer can sit on them
3. motorized glaugeg
4. it is becoming a ciuneans
5. classed as a motorized eehlivc
6. Laws eurigre the suitcases to be registered
7. The company's Insoag
8. lporpau with celebrities
9. media nyrsoaelipt
10. lithium bateetirs
11. transport rexetp Dr Takeru Shibayama
12. continue to greeme

Answers – Synonym Match

1. f	2. i	3. d	4. b	5. j
6. c	7. h	8. e	9. a	10. g

Role Play

Role A – Suitcases

You think suitcases are the best things to ride. Tell the others three reasons why. Tell them why their things to ride aren't as fun. Also, tell the others which is the least useful of these (and why): supermarket carts, horses or office chairs.

Role B – Supermarket Carts

You think supermarket carts are the best things to ride. Tell the others three reasons why. Tell them why their things to ride aren't as fun. Also, tell the others which is the least useful of these (and why): suitcases, horses or office chairs.

Role C – Horses

You think horses are the best things to ride. Tell the others three reasons why. Tell them why their things to ride aren't as fun. Also, tell the others which is the least useful of these (and why): supermarket carts, suitcases or office chairs.

Role D – Office Chairs

You think office chairs are the best things to ride. Tell the others three reasons why. Tell them why their things to ride aren't as fun. Also, tell the others which is the least useful of these (and why): supermarket carts, horses or suitcases.

Speaking – Things to ride

Rank these with your partner. Put the best things to ride at the top. Change partners often and share your rankings.

- Suitcases
- Supermarket carts
- e-Scooters
- Horses
- Motorbikes
- Elephants
- Unicycles
- Office chairs

Answers – True False

1 F	2 F	3 T	4 T	5 F	6 F	7 F	8 T
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Answers to Phrase Match and Spelling are in the text.