

Ambassador Philippe Bertoux
Representative of France on the Council of ICAO,
Chairperson of the Air Transport Committee

14 May 2020

Dear Ambassador,

Re: Measures to support the safe resumption of travel retail operations

Further to my letter earlier of earlier this week, please find attached the detailed comments of the DFWC

The Duty Free World Council (DFWC) strongly supports international and domestic steps to effectively manage the COVID-19 outbreak using a responsible, science-led approach.

As the travel sector looks to restart operations in 2020 it will be vital for there to be international alignment on the measures required to ensure passenger and colleague safety and maintain confidence in the operations of duty free and travel retail stores at airports.

Duty free is a critical source of revenue and cashflow to airports in a time when this is urgently needed. The loss of revenue from landing charges and airline related activity has further demonstrated the value of non-aeronautical revenue streams in the wider travel ecosystem.

Please find enclosed a short paper setting out the measures the Duty Free World Council believes necessary to minimise health risks, while enabling retailer outlets to operate and generate much-needed revenue for the aviation sector.

We are confident these proposed measures allow Duty Free and Travel Retail shops to reopen safely and simultaneously with the resumption of viable passenger traffic numbers, and quickly build and maintain passenger confidence to travel again, while providing vital revenue to airports.

Yours Sincerely



Sarah Branquinho
President
Duty Free World Council

Duty Free World Council

Recommended operational steps for reopening duty free retail outlets following the COVID-19 outbreak.¹

The Duty Free World Council (DFWC) strongly supports international and domestic steps to effectively manage the COVID-19 outbreak using a responsible, science-led approach. As the travel sector looks to restart operations in 2020 it will be vital for there to be international alignment on the measures required to ensure passenger and colleague safety and maintain confidence in the operations of duty free and travel retail stores at airports.

Duty and tax-free retail provides a critical source of revenue and cashflow to airports in a time when this is urgently needed. The loss of revenue from landing charges and airline related activity has further demonstrated the value of non-aeronautical revenue streams in the wider travel ecosystem.

As the aviation industry looks to restart, it is important that duty free and travel retail operators are able to do so in a way that places the health and safety of passengers and colleagues at the front of mind. This paper sets out the measures DFWC believes are necessary to minimise health risks, while enabling retailer outlets to operate and generate much-needed revenue for the aviation sector.

Duty free & travel retail – a very different retail channel to downtown shopping

In adopting coordinated hygiene and safety measures for airports, it is important to consider the specificities of how duty free is organised:

- Duty free shops are an integrated part of airport terminal infrastructure capacity – they have been built as part of the airport infrastructure, not as standalone retail operations.
- Larger duty free stores operate very differently to high street retailers. Most importantly, in this context, is the fact that walk-through shops do not usually have designated entry and exit points.
- Passengers typically have limited dwell time once airside, and duty free shops are designed to cater for the passenger in a hurry – enabling passengers to select and purchase products efficiently and continue on their journey.
- Limiting passenger access to stores will place more pressure on capacity elsewhere in terminals (for example, see Annex 1 detailing anticipated passenger flows in Hamburg Airport, and Annex 2 detailing anticipated passenger flows in Dublin Airport). However, limited access plans have been thought through in detail and can be implemented if they are required.
- Providing passengers with continued access to duty and tax-free general and specialist shops will contribute to improving the overall passenger experience as lockdowns lift, contributing to an increased sense of security, wellbeing and normality.

¹ Duty Free and Travel Retail shops serve international passengers while travelling through airports and ports, and on board airlines and cruise and ferry vessels. While some of the rationale is most relevant for airport shops, most measures outlined in this document are relevant to both the aviation and maritime channels.

Additional measures to be taken

The following measures are proposed with the safety and security of passengers and colleagues front of mind. They are intended to be easily understood by the public, and allow for a maximum of safety and comfort.

Protection of colleagues

- Effective training to ensure the highest and most appropriate standards of customer service and product handling, as well as welfare of staff
- Availability of protective equipment (masks, sanitary gels, gloves) where relevant / required by domestic guidelines
- Plastic / plexiglass screens at till points
- Signage at cash register area to actively encourage payment card usage and contactless payments, and regular cleaning of surfaces and equipment at point of sale.

Protection of customers

- Communications to customers encouraging them to shop quickly and to keep their distance from others, and hygiene measures in duty and tax-free retail stores
- Clear signage to prevent customers congregating and spending too much time in the shops including further spacing with clear signage to ensure appropriate distancing at the cash register area (floor markers)
- Availability of hygiene equipment (hand sanitizers, sanitary gels stations)

Accompanying in-store measures

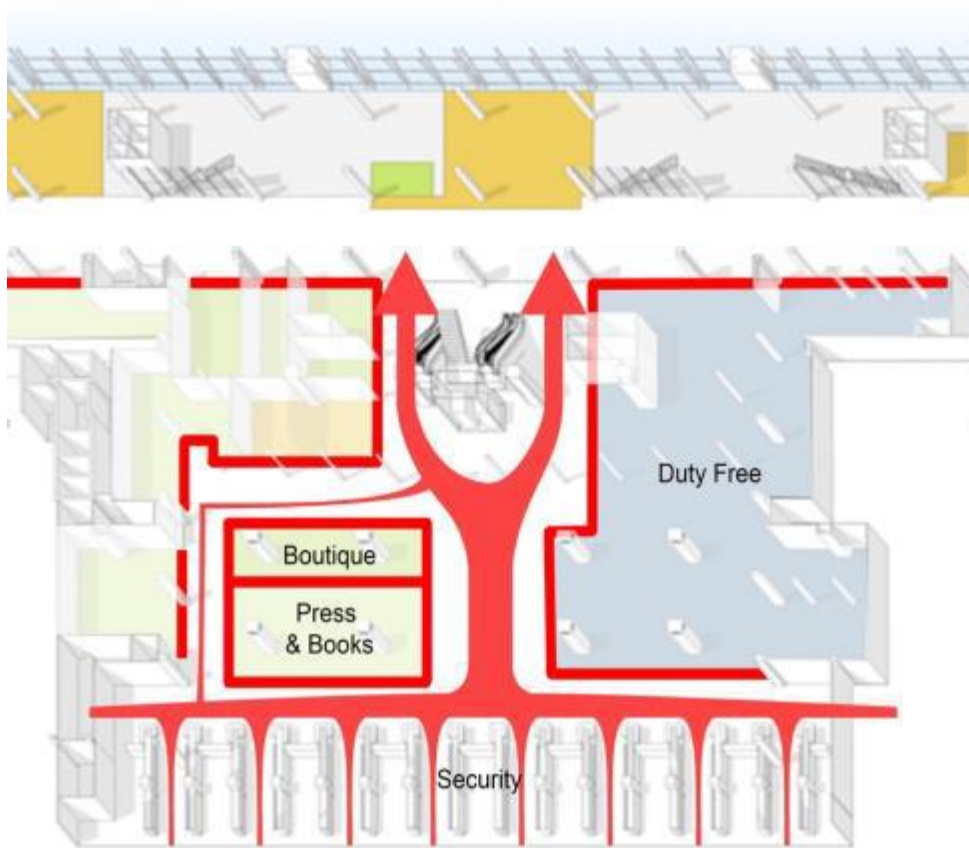
- Strict hygiene protocols including regular cleaning and disinfecting of contact points (floors, shelves etc) and equipment (tills, shopping baskets, card readers, etc)
- Strict hygiene protocols for all goods delivered to the store (all supplies arriving in outer boxes and goods to be placed in store by staff with gloves)
- For large 'walk-through' stores, streamlined organisation of shop furniture and display stands to ensure steady and efficient flow of passengers at a safe distance, including supervision of passenger access and movement in the shop, and adapted central aisles to increase flow and comfort
- For smaller stores, such as specialist stores, the same principle as currently operating at small stores on the High Street may apply – a limited number of customers permitted to enter the store at any one time, with physical distancing and other appropriate hygiene measures within the store.

While these measures are essential and will be implemented for as long as necessary, it is important to remember that over the next year and possibly longer, passenger numbers will be significantly lower and therefore the pressures upon the system will not be as great. This will enable the above measures to be implemented with a minimum of passenger and colleague disruption, while still enabling duty and tax-free stores to provide a full service offer.

We are confident that the proposed measures will allow Duty and Tax-Free and Travel Retail shops to reopen safely and simultaneously with the resumption of viable passenger traffic numbers, and quickly build and maintain passenger confidence to travel again, while providing vital revenue to airports. More detailed guidelines are available upon request.

ANNEX 1: Example of Hamburg Airport Plaza

Passengers flow between closed shops

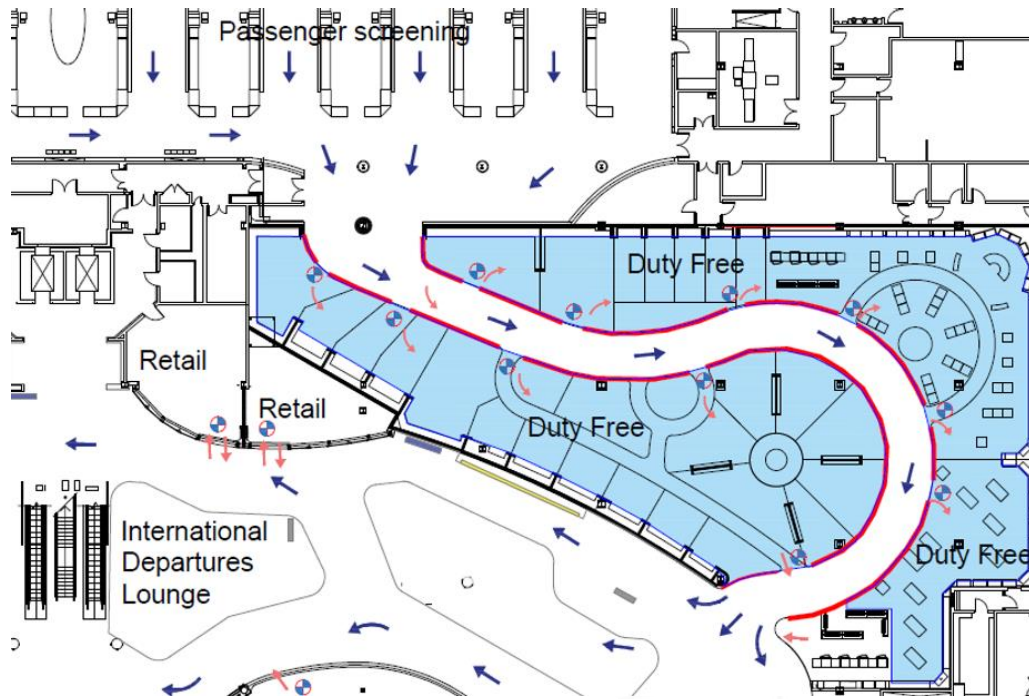


Open shops spread the flow



ANNEX 2: Example of Dublin Airport

Passengers confined to path inside walkthrough store



Passengers able to flow through walkthrough store

