

# Dubai Airports readies for ban on single-use plastics



As the self-imposed deadline for a ban on all single-use plastics at the world's busiest international airport, Dubai International (DXB), draws close, change is coming to the world of air travel. Announced by operator, Dubai Airports, in June 2019, Dubai's two airports (DXB and DWC) will soon be free of single-use plastics in order to manage its environmental impact and reduce its ecological footprint.

Since making the pledge, Dubai Airports has been working closely with more than 250 of its concession and hospitality partners to fulfill the promise by the beginning of the new year. With 90 million passengers passing through the two airports on an annual basis – consuming tens of thousands of plastic items daily – the plastic-free initiative has presented some serious challenges for those involved.

Eugene Barry, EVP Commercial at Dubai Airports, says: "This pledge is another step on a long journey to becoming a more environmentally responsible airport. Along with our partners, including global brands such as McDonalds, Costa Coffee and Starbucks, we are committed to not only removing single-use plastics but in their place providing appropriate and importantly sustainable alternatives."

The phased approach will see plastic cutlery, drinking straws, take-away food packaging and polythene bags removed from cafés, restaurants and stores starting January 1, 2020. During the next twelve months, additional products will be replaced both in customer spaces and behind the scenes.

"Among the challenges faced, the biggest is sourcing alternatives for plastic bottles, one of the most frequently used and discarded pieces of single-use plastics. As we work to reduce and ultimately eliminate plastics from our airports, we are increasing our recycling facilities in the customer spaces and a new partnership that will allow us to properly dispose of thousands of tonnes of single-use plastic, each year," adds Barry.

Results from a specially commissioned survey into the recycling habits of travelers showed an increased awareness, both around personal usage of plastic products and recycling, at home and while traveling. The additional recycling points will support the management of the tens of thousands of bottles (and waste) brought in to the airport daily, something the team expects will decrease as people become more conscious of their usage.

## Survey Results

- In the UAE, over half (52%) of respondents claim to carry a reusable water bottle while traveling
- 49% would choose to dine in an airport restaurant to avoid plastic packaging that comes with take-out food options
- Almost a third (32%) of respondents refuse to buy items at the airport containing non-recyclable

materials

- Importantly, 92% of respondents state that airports should be more vocal about what steps they are taking to recycle waste

Moving forward, with the support of global brands such as McDonald's and Costa Coffee, Dubai Airports is destined for success. The former is replacing a total of 5,608,740 items with recycle materials at Dubai's two airports and the latter is backing the initiative by launching a 100% renewable, plant-based smart cup.