

5 May 2020

PRESS STATEMENT – SHOP WITH CONFIDENCE AND PEACE OF MIND

Since the Conditional Movement Control Order was implemented 4 May 2020, malls have started to see the opening of stores offering a diverse range of products and services for sectors approved by the Government. Malls and tenants have put in great efforts for SOP compliance and are now welcoming consumers back with confidence and peace of mind.

In the first place, shopping malls were never closed, but remained open since 18 March 2020 to cater to essential services like supermarket, pharmacies and food & beverage (F&B) outlets. It is estimated about 70-80% of shops will open in stages by this week, except for non-permitted businesses. Practically all malls are ready to cater for 100% operations, pending further directives on details from individual local authorities and all have prepared for the recommended SOPs to be in place.

The general operation hours for shopping malls are 10am to 10pm, but in view of the fact that MCO is still in place until 12 May 2020, landlords have allowed tenants to have flexible trading hours within this period. This ranges from a later opening from 11am and close earlier from 8pm generally, depending on the business.

As expected, it is encouraging that the number of shoppers are increasing day to day. Shop owners are anticipating a growing spike from pent-up demand and hopefully will experience the phenomenon of 'REVENGE SHOPPING'. F&B outlets have reported increasing takeaway demand although it is disappointing that dine-in is still not allowed in many localities.

Safety and Cleanliness

Safety for all staff, tenants, patrons, visitors and shoppers etc is of primary concern in shopping malls and malls are all following the SOPs set by MITI. These include monitoring temperature, wearing of masks, providing hand sanitisers at mall entrances & other strategic spots for shoppers and also for staff. Once shoppers get through the entrances, retailers again practice the same procedure with temperature checks and hand sanitization at their outlet entrances – so there is double screening for public confidence and safety.

Enhanced cleanliness procedures in malls have been in place since February, with more regular cleaning with sanitisers and disinfectants at public utilities and other frequent touch point areas eg escalator hand-rails, lifts, balcony railings, balustrades, sitting areas, e Directories, washrooms, baby rooms, concierge stations, wheelchairs, baby strollers, and scooters etc. and all others that involves human contact. These enhanced cleaning procedures also include thorough cleaning and disinfecting of M&E installations like components of the air-conditioning system, pipes, ducts etc.

Social Distancing

Shops have implemented social distancing rules with floor markings and limiting the number of shoppers in the shop at any one time to avoid congregation density. In F&B outlets where dine-in is allowed, dining tables have been reconfigured to cater for a minimum of 1m between diners as well as floor markers at entrances 1 m apart while they queue to enter.

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Social distancing also applies to malls' common areas like seats being placed minimum 1m apart, bench seating to only accommodate shoppers to be seated minimum 1m apart and/or removed as well as the reconfiguration of concourse stalls/booths at the concourse for safe distancing. There are also clear demarcations on the floor or physical barriers to remind and deter shoppers getting too close to each other for queues to customer service stations, parking machines, ATMs etc.

Malls also practice social distancing at lifts with queue markers and which will now allow less passengers in lifts while shoppers have to stand at least 2 steps apart on escalators.

In addition, some malls have also set up designated areas for the parking of food delivery vehicles as well as centralized locations where food delivery riders may wait safely with social distancing.

Public Announcements and Education

In true community spirit, malls have embarked on more frequent public announcements to remind shoppers of the need to practice social distancing with signages and notices to advise on social distancing, hygiene etc.

Malls also engage social media to keep shoppers informed on what's going on in the mall and to disseminate documented SOPs to both shoppers and tenants on commitments to the above practices.

Fighting Covid-19 needs close community effort amongst shoppers, workers, all departments in shopping malls including operations, marketing, and of course, the shops where we deeply appreciate tenants who are generally complying with their respective SOPs.

With all these in place, shoppers should be confident, comfortable and safe shopping at malls in the "new norm". Shopping will become a breeze once we all get used to the necessary procedures to ensure safety and cleanliness.

Thank you.