

Liquids, Aerosols & Gels Myths and Realities - Summary Q & A -

The existing ban on the carriage of liquids, aerosols and gels (LAGs) was introduced in August 2006, following the discovery in the UK of a terrorist plot involving liquids explosives and transatlantic flights.

As we are rapidly approaching Phase 1 of the EU's plan to relax these restrictions on 29 April 2011, ACI EUROPE feels that not enough information has been made available to decision makers on this issue. The purpose of this Q & A document is to provide clear and concise information on Phase 1. We encourage you to check and confirm the information contained in this leaflet with your national authorities and the European Commission.

1. What will happen on 29 April 2011?

From that date onwards, all passengers from anywhere carrying LAGs purchased at airports anywhere in the world in security, tamper evident bags (STEBs) will be allowed to travel through EU airports and to keep these LAGs without the threat of confiscation, provided a percentage of these LAGs are screened at the EU airport.

2. Will passengers be able to carry liquids, aerosols and gels from home (shampoo, drinks) in their hand luggage from 29 April onwards?

NO. Passengers still have to use the small 100 ml containers inside one transparent re-sealable plastic bag of a capacity not exceeding 1 litre, for their toiletries. Other larger items brought from home or purchased outside the airport will not be allowed.

3. Is ACI EUROPE in favour of lifting the restrictions on LAGs?

YES! The ability for passengers to keep their LAGs with them is key to improving the passenger experience at airports. In addition, airport retail is an important source of revenues for airports which in turn are used to finance their infrastructure.

However, ACI EUROPE has repeatedly stated that its support for lifting the restrictions on LAGs is conditional on not compromising security and genuinely improving the passenger experience.

4. Will LAGs purchased duty free at a non-EU airport (excluding EEA/Swiss airports), in a security tamper evident bag have to be screened?

YES. A percentage of all passengers who have LAGs in STEBs from non-EU countries will have to be screened.

5. What will happen for example to a bottle of champagne or perfume purchased duty free at an airport?

If selected to be screened, the product packaging will be opened and depending on the screening technology used, the bottle may be opened and the liquid sampled (when Type A equipment is used-see question 11) to verify its content. Will passengers accept to have their bottle of champagne or perfume opened and sampled before it is returned to them? How will passengers react and who will compensate them?

6. Does this rule only apply to passengers from outside the EU transferring at EU airports?

NO, not exclusively. Any passenger will be able to purchase their duty free items at an airport anywhere in the world (as long as the items are placed in a STEB with the original receipt enclosed) and travel to any EU airport. As long as passengers leave the EU within 36 hours and the STEB has not been opened they will be able to re-enter any EU airport with their LAGs. ACI EUROPE believes this introduces a significant risk in the system.

7. Does this new rule improve the security of the travelling public?

NO. The level of security at EU airports is good, but there is no guarantee that the level of security at other airports elsewhere in the world is of the same standard as that enjoyed in the EU. Therefore, LAGs obtained at airports outside the EU may present a risk given that there is no guarantee as to the security of the airport supply chain in many third countries. ACI EUROPE is also concerned with the performance of the screening equipment currently available (see below).

8. Will the rules be the same throughout the EU?

Unfortunately, NO. Some Member States will implement more stringent measures (such as 100% screening of non-EU originating LAGs) which will result in long queues at security checkpoints. Different rules will, therefore, apply depending on the country of transfer and onward destination, adding to the confusion for passengers.

9. Are other countries and regions of the world lifting the ban on the carriage of LAGs? Will they accept the new EU rules?

NO. There are currently 73 states (including all EU/EEA states) that have implemented restrictions on LAGs. No other state or World region is lifting the ban until the screening technology is considered mature enough for deployment at airports. The USA has spent millions of dollars over 2-3 years trying to develop liquid screening technology, but has decided not to lift the ban yet. Some of the EU’s major trading partners (like the US) are unlikely to accept the EU rule and will continue to enforce the ban on passengers travelling to the US.

10. Will passengers travelling from non-EU countries, transferring in the EU, onto the US be able to keep duty free LAGs purchased at their originating airport?

NO. At present, any LAGs purchased in third country airports, will have to be surrendered before boarding their transatlantic flight.

11. How many different LAGs screening machines are currently available?

The European Commission claims that there are 10 machines of 3 different types available. This statement needs to be put in perspective.

- **Type A** requires bottles to be opened and sampled to examine the contents (see above). There are 4 machines of this type available. This will not improve the passenger experience.
- **Type B** can screen an unopened bottle, but only one at a time. There are 3 machines of this type available, however independent laboratory tests have produced false alarm rates that are unacceptably high.*
- **Type C** can screen multiple, unopened bottles, but only in special trays and with a potentially complicated operational process. There are 3 machines of this type available, however these all come from the same manufacturer and are variations of exactly the same machine. As for Type A equipment, independent laboratory tests have also produced unacceptably high false alarm rates.*

* In a live operating environment, false alarm rates should not exceed 5%.

12. Has the available technology been trialled in a live airport environment here in Europe (operational trials)?

Very limited trials have been carried out. An essential step in the process is therefore missing.

13. Is ACI EUROPE alone in opposing Phase 1? Is this an airport issue?

NO and NO. Several EU Member States and the airline industry share ACI EUROPE’s concerns. Phase 1 has security and passenger facilitation implications which are likely to considerably worsen the passenger experience as a result.
