

OREGON'S BOTTLE BILL

Frequently Asked Questions



How does Oregon's beverage container redemption system work?

In general, a distributor charges a 10-cent deposit when it delivers beverages covered under Oregon's Bottle Bill to a store, then the store charges a 10-cent deposit when it sells beverages to a customer. When a customer returns the empty containers to a store or redemption center, the store pays the customer 10 cents per container, and when the store returns the empty containers to a distributor, the distributor pays 10 cents per container to the stores.

What kinds of beverages are included in Oregon's Bottle Bill?

- Water, flavored water, soda water, and mineral water
- Beer/malt beverages
- Carbonated soft drinks

Only containers for these beverages in sizes three liters or less are included and have a refund value of 10 cents.

• All other beverages except distilled liquor, wine, dairy or plant-based milks, infant formula, and meal replacement beverages, including but not limited to:

- Tea
- Coffee
- Hard cider
- Fruit juice
- Energy and sports drinks
- Coconut water

Only containers for these beverages in sizes from 4 ounces up to and including 1.5 liters are included and have a refund value of 10 cents.

For more details about the beverages that were added to the Bottle Bill on January 1, 2018:
[Bottle Bill Expansion FAQs](#)

Are beverages in all types of containers included in the Bottle Bill?

No. Beverages in cartons, foil pouches, drink boxes, and metal containers that require a tool to be opened are not included even if the beverage and container size would otherwise have a refund value.

What is the refund value per container?

The refund value on redeemable containers is 10 cents. The refund value increased from 5 cents to 10 cents on April 1, 2017.

Can I redeem containers that are not labeled with the Oregon refund value?

The Oregon refund value of 10 cents must be indicated on the container or label for each beverage covered under Oregon's Bottle Bill. Most manufacturers show Oregon's refund value as OR 10¢. Stores may refuse to redeem containers that don't show OR 10¢ with a couple of temporary exceptions.

Water, beer, and carbonated soft drink containers may continue to show OR 5¢ through September 30, 2018. Retailers may charge a 10-cent deposit on those containers and must refund 10¢ when they are redeemed.

The beverages that were added on January 1, 2018 are not required to have OR 10¢ on their containers until January 1, 2019. However, even if these containers don't have an Oregon refund value on them, stores may still charge a 10-cent deposit and customers must be paid 10 cents per container when they redeem the containers.

Does “OR 10¢” have to be in any specific font or size on the containers?

The Oregon refund value must be clearly indicated on the label or container, but there are no requirements that it be in any specific font or size. See [Can I redeem containers that are not labeled with the Oregon refund value?](#) above for temporary exceptions to labelling requirements.

An auto shop that I use gives away bottles of water with their own company label. These bottles don't show an Oregon refund value. Is that okay?

Yes. Oregon's Bottle Bill requires that beverage containers that are sold or offered for sale be labeled with the Oregon refund value. Beverages that are given away are not required to show the refund value. These containers will likely not be redeemable but may be recycled.

Does the State of Oregon require an Initiator of Deposit?

No. The State does not receive any proceeds from container returns and there is no reporting required.

Do stores still have to take back the same number of containers as when the refund value was 5 cents? And do they have still take to back the same number of containers after the January 1, 2018 expansion?

Yes. The number of containers that a store must accept did not change with the change from 5 cents to 10 cents and did not change with the January 1, 2018 expansion of beverages included in the Bottle Bill. For example, if a store had to take back 144 containers per person per day when the refund value was 5 cents or before the January 1, 2018 expansion, they still have to take back 144 containers per person per day now that the refund value is 10 cents.

Can I redeem containers that I bought in another state?

No. Only containers for beverages purchased in Oregon may be redeemed in Oregon.

How many containers must stores and redemption centers accept each day?

Retailers that are 5,000 or more square feet must accept the following number of containers per person per day at all hours they are open:

Not in a redemption center zone	144
In a redemption center zone but qualifies for an exemption	144
Participates in Zone 1 of a redemption center	0
Participates in Zone 2 of a redemption center	24
In a redemption center zone but does not participate	350

Retailers that are under 5,000 square feet must accept the following number of containers per person per day at all hours they are open:

Not in a redemption center zone	50
In Zone 1 or Zone 2 of a redemption center	24

BottleDrop Redemption Centers:

Containers fed by a customer into a reverse vending machine	350
Hand counted by redemption center staff	50
Green bags of counted by redemption center staff	2 bags

Redemption centers will accept more than these limits for fundraisers and others by special arrangement. BottleDrop Express locations will also accept 2 bags per account per day (see ***What is a BottleDrop Express*** below).

Do stores have to post any kind of sign about redeeming containers?

Yes. Oregon law requires stores to post a clearly visible and legible sign containing information about how many containers they must accept and what containers they may legally refuse. The sign must be posted in order to refuse more than the limits of containers listed in [How many containers must stores and redemption centers accept each day?](#) Stores may contact staff in OLCC's Bottle Bill Program at OLCC.bottlebill@oregon.gov to get a sign that meets the legal requirement for their store.

What kinds of containers must stores accept?

Retailers that are 5,000 or more square feet that accept containers (see [How many containers can I redeem each day](#) above) must accept containers for all brands and sizes of beverage containers for each kind they sell even if they don't sell that size or brand. There are six kinds of beverages covered under the Bottle Bill:

- Water and flavored water
- Carbonated soft drinks, mineral waters and soda water
- All other non-alcoholic beverages (excluding dairy and plant-based milks, infant formula, and meal replacement beverages).
- Beer or other malt beverages
- All other alcoholic beverages (excluding distilled liquor and wine)
- Marijuana beverages

For example, if a store 5,000 or more square feet sells water, soft drinks, tea, and beer they are required to accept container returns of all brands and sizes of water, soft drinks, all other non-alcoholic beverages, and beer even for brand names they don't carry in their store, including private labels or brands carried only by other stores. If a large retailer sells only water, soft drinks, and energy drinks (but not beer), they are required to accept back all brands and sizes of soft drinks, water, and all other non-alcoholic beverages (but not beer), even for brands they don't carry.

Retailers under 5,000 square feet may refuse to accept containers if they don't sell that brand or size. If a store sells a brand or size, they must accept the empty container even if the beverage was purchased at another store.

BottleDrop Redemption Centers are required to accept all cans and bottles covered under Oregon's Bottle Bill. To see if a redemption center is located near you, please check the OLCC website for a complete list of redemption centers at http://www.oregon.gov/olcc/docs/bottle_bill/redemptioncenters.pdf.

What is a BottleDrop Redemption Center?

A BottleDrop Redemption Center is a staffed facility independently operated by the Oregon Beverage Recycling Cooperative (OBRC) that has received approval from OLCC to accept empty containers from consumers. Stores with reverse vending machines or BottleDrop Express facilities are not BottleDrop Redemption Centers. BottleDrop Redemption Centers are staffed and open 7 days per weeks for a minimum of 10 hours per day during June, July, and August and a minimum of 9 hours per day during other months. They accept up to 350 containers per person per day, provide reverse vending machines, hand counts, and a drop door for account holders to drop off bags of containers for redemption center staff to count. Customers may return containers by feeding containers into reverse vending machines, by asking for a hand count, or, if a customer

chooses to open a BottleDrop account, by dropping off green bags full of containers to be counted by BottleDrop staff.

How do I access money from my BottleDrop account?

Account holders may access their funds at kiosks located at BottleDrop Redemption Centers, at stores participating in a BottleDrop Redemption Center, and at retailers that are a BottleDrop Express location. Some stores designated as a PLUS location by OBRC allow customers to print a voucher from the store kiosk that is worth 20% more at that store, thereby giving customers 12¢ per container returned.

How does the drop door for account holders work?

One feature of BottleDrop Redemption Centers and of BottleDrop Express locations (see [What is a BottleDrop Express?](#) below) is a drop door for account holders to drop off green bags of containers for redemption center staff to count. Customers may drop off up to two green bags per account per day. Green bags are available from redemption centers and BottleDrop Express retailers for a small fee. The refund value of the containers deposited in the drop door is credited to the account holder's account within 5 business days.

What is a BottleDrop Express?

A BottleDrop Express is a drop door for account holders to drop off green bags of containers like at a BottleDrop Redemption Center, but are located at retailers. OBRC picks up the full green bags from the retailer, counts the containers, and credits the account holder's account within 5 days, the same as at a redemption center. However, BottleDrop Express facilities are not BottleDrop Redemption Centers and stores where the Express facilities are located and in the surrounding area must continue to accept 144 or 50 containers per person per day.

Where can I find a BottleDrop Redemption Center or BottleDrop Express?

OLCC has approved more than 20 redemption centers around Oregon. To find a redemption center near you or for a list of each redemption center's participating retailers, go to http://www.oregon.gov/olcc/docs/bottle_bill/redemptioncenters.pdf. For more information, including locations of BottleDrop Express and PLUS retailers (see [How do I access money from my BottleDrop account?](#) above), go to the BottleDrop website at <https://www.bottledropcenters.com/>. You can also view the application and public notice on pending redemption centers, if any, on OLCC's website at http://www.oregon.gov/OLCC/pages/bottle_bill.aspx.

How does a store participate in a BottleDrop Redemption Center?

Oregon Law allows for up to two "convenience zones" surrounding a redemption center. Zone 1 is the sector within a radius of not more than two miles around the redemption center. Zone 2 begins at the border of Zone 1 and extends out to a radius of not more than 3-1/2 miles around the redemption center. These distances are maximums and redemption center zones may not always extend to the full distance. Also, a redemption center may only have a Zone 1. Stores that are 5,000 or more square feet in size that fall within either redemption center zone may participate in the redemption center by contracting with OBRC for a fee. These stores are not required to participate but if they don't participate must provide equivalent services to the redemption center or be eligible for an exemption that they provide equivalent services.

How does an exemption of redemption center requirements work?

Stores 5,000 or more square feet located in a redemption center zone may request approval from OLCC for an exemption if they can show they sold fewer than 100,000 individual beverage containers during the prior calendar year. If a store is exempt from redemption center requirements, the store must accept at least 144 empty beverage containers per person per day.

Even if a store qualifies for an exemption, it may choose to participate in a redemption center to lower the number of containers it has to accept from customers.

Can stores under 5,000 square feet participate in a BottleDrop Redemption Center?

No. The Oregon legislature established that only stores 5,000 or more square feet may participate in a redemption center. However, stores under 5,000 square feet may limit returns to 24 containers per person per day simply by being located within a redemption center zone. To find out if you are in a redemption center zone and may limit returns to 24, contact staff in OLCC's Bottle Bill Program at OLCC.bottlebill@oregon.gov.

Can a retailer refuse to redeem a container if the beverage was not purchased in Oregon?

Yes. The only containers that may legally be redeemed in Oregon are for beverages that were purchased in Oregon. There is no requirement that a person has to be an Oregon resident to redeem containers, but a retailer or redemption center may refuse to accept any container if staff have reasonable grounds to believe the beverage was not purchased in Oregon. For some locations along the border with other states, staff may request receipts as proof that the beverages were purchased in Oregon.

Does a retailer have to accept crushed containers?

A retailer or redemption center can't refuse to accept containers simply because they are crushed, dented, or damaged. However, they may refuse to accept containers where the brand cannot be identified and/or the Oregon refund value cannot be seen. See [Can I redeem containers that are not labeled with the Oregon refund value?](#) above for the temporary exceptions to accepting containers without an Oregon refund value.

Retailers and redemption centers should refuse to accept containers that have been flattened by going through a reverse vending machine because those containers have already been redeemed. Cans that have been fed through a reverse vending machine will have small square indentations or perforations and will be fairly symmetrically crushed, and bottles will have a crushed neck.

Only one store in my town has reverse vending machines and the machines are frequently broken. How am I supposed to return my containers?

Retailers are not required to have reverse vending machines unless they are 5,000 or more square feet, in a redemption center zone, and are not participating in the redemption center. Very few retailers fall into that category. If a store's reverse vending machines are not working or if the lines to return containers are very long the store must hand count up to the maximum number of containers the store is required to accept. See [How many containers must stores and redemption centers accept each day?](#) above.

Some containers won't go through a store's reverse vending machines. What do I do with those containers?

If a container is redeemable under Oregon's Bottle Bill but won't go through a reverse vending machine for some reason, the store must have staff hand count the container. Redemption centers will hand count up to 50 containers per person per day.

A store refused to accept my container because it was dirty. Can they do that?

Customers are not required to wash their containers and retailers and redemption centers must accept containers if they contain some water, residue of the original contents, or are dusty. However, they may refuse to accept containers if they contain foreign objects or liquids other than water or residue of the original contents or are caked with dirt or another substance.

Can a store require that cans and bottles be returned in any particular box or bag?

No. But staff may ask customers to remove their cans and bottles from the box or bag they brought the cans and bottles in and place them into a box or bag provided by the store.

Can a store refuse to accept empty beverage containers because they are out of space to store the empties or are busy?

No. There is no exception for not having storage space or for being busy. As with customers who have to wait to purchase an item, customers who are returning containers cannot always expect immediate attention.

Can a store limit the hours or days that they accept container returns?

Retailers that must accept containers (see [How many containers can I redeem each day?](#) above) must accept containers on all days and at all hours the store is open.

If a store does not charge the customer a deposit, does it have to accept container returns and/or pay a refund?

Yes. The container must be accepted and the Oregon refund value must be paid to the customer even if the store did not charge a deposit.

A store where I shop offers a large bag that I can fill with containers up to a line. When I return the bag full of containers the store pays me a flat fee that is less than what I would get if I was paid 10 cents per container. Is this legal?

Stores and distributors may offer this system as a convenient option for returning containers. However, the store or distributor may not refuse to hand count or to accept containers through their reverse vending machine if the customer chooses to be paid 10 cents for each container.

I work with a non-profit and we accept empty beverage containers as a donation. The store where I shop limits returns to 144 containers per person per day. Is there any place to return large amounts of containers so my charity can receive this money?

Upon request, some retailers will work with nonprofits and fundraisers to allow greater numbers of containers to be returned. Also, OBRC's Give program provides several fundraising options, including a traditional can drive, setting up a blue bag fundraiser account, or using the regular green bag drop-off program. For more information go to <https://www.bottledropcenters.com/Give>.

What is the penalty for a retailer that doesn't accept empty beverage containers?

Businesses that are licensed to sell alcohol or marijuana may be subject to penalties and sanctions including liquor or marijuana license suspension starting at three days and civil penalties starting at \$495.00. Businesses that are not licensed to sell alcohol may be subject to a \$500.00 civil penalty. Each day a violation occurs constitutes a separate violation with a separate sanction. Store clerks may be charged with a Class A misdemeanor.

What is the penalty for a retailer that doesn't participate in a redemption or provide equivalent services?

The sanction for a retailer failing to cure a violation by either participating in a redemption center, providing equivalent services, or showing it is exempt from providing equivalent services to a redemption center starts at \$200.00. Each day a violation occurs constitutes a separate violation with a separate sanction.

Did the refund value go to 10 cents and were the new beverages added on January 1, 2018 to generate money for the State of Oregon?

No. The State doesn't receive any proceeds from container returns.

Who should I contact if I want more information or to make a complaint about a business?
Becky Voelkel at 503-872-5132 or OLCC.BottleBill@oregon.gov

(rev. January 2018)