



OREGON'S BOTTLE BILL

Frequently Asked Questions

What kinds (types) of containers are currently 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 of three liters or less are included and have a refund value.

Hard cider, juice, tea, coffee, coconut water, non-alcoholic kombucha, and more are not currently covered under the Oregon Bottle Bill, but will be effective January 1, 2018 (see next question). However, if a business charges the deposit on one of these items, that business must redeem the container. Containers of alcoholic kombucha (0.5% or more alcohol by volume) are included in Oregon's Bottle Bill if the alcohol is derived from the fermentation of sugar or another appropriate substitute for malt.

What kinds of beverages will be included beginning in 2018?

Oregon Law states that effective January 1, 2018, all beverages except distilled liquor, wine, dairy or plant-based milk, and infant formula will be covered under Oregon's Bottle Bill and will include a refund value on the container. The following will continue to be covered in container sizes of 3 liters or less:

- Water
- Beer
- Carbonated soft drinks



Beginning January 1, 2018, most other beverages will be added in container sizes of 4 ounces to 1.5 liters, including but not limited to:

- Tea
- Coffee
- Hard cider
- Fruit juice
- Kombucha
- Coconut water



What is the refund value per container?

The refund value on refundable containers is 10 cents. The refund value increased from 5 cents to 10 cents on April 1, 2017. In accordance with Oregon Law, the OLCC was required to evaluate state-wide redemption data for each of the two previous calendar years to determine if the number of beverage containers returned for the refund value was less than 80% of the total number of beverage containers that were sold in Oregon. The redemption rate does not include containers recycled at curbside. Because the redemption rates for 2014 and 2015 were below 80%, ORS 459A.705 required the refund value to increase to 10 cents. The OLCC calculated the statewide redemption rate for 2014 at 68.26% and 2015 at 64.45%.



I have containers that I bought before April 1, 2017 that say “OR 5¢” on them. How much will I receive when I return them now that the refund value is 10 cents?

Any containers returned starting April 1, 2017 will be redeemed at 10 cents no matter when they were purchased or if they say “OR 5¢” on them.

A store charged me a 10-cent deposit on a beverage that shows “OR 5¢” on the label. Is that legal?

Yes. Retailers may now charge a deposit of 10 cents per container.

Do stores still have to take back the same number of containers as when the refund value was 5 cents?

Yes. For example, if a store had to take back 144 containers per person per day when the refund value was 5 cents, they still have to take back 144 containers per person per day now that the refund value is 10 cents.

The store where I shop is selling beverages marked with “OR 5¢”. Is it okay for those beverages to still be sold in Oregon?

Yes. Governor Brown signed a bill allowing containers marked with “OR 5¢” to be sold in Oregon as late as September 30, 2018. However, when those empty containers are returned for refund they must be redeemed at 10 cents.

Did the refund value go to 10 cents to generate money for the State of Oregon?

No. The State doesn't receive any proceeds from container returns. Distributors charge a deposit to stores, who in turn charge a deposit to customers. When customers return the empty containers to a store the customers are paid 10 cents per container, and when stores return empty containers to a distributor the stores are paid 10 cents per container. Generally, distributors keep the money from unredeemed containers.

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

No. All types of containers included in the Oregon Bottle Bill that are sold in Oregon must be labeled appropriately with the Oregon refund value to receive the deposit refund. Only cans and bottles labeled appropriately with the Oregon refund value should be sold in Oregon. Containers that are labeled “OR 5¢” may be sold in Oregon and must be accepted by retailers for a refund value of 10 cents.

How many containers can I redeem each day? And what brand and sizes will a store accept?

- Retailers of 5,000 square feet or more (generally large retail chains and large independent retailers) that are not located within a redemption center convenience zone must accept up to 144 containers per person per day. If these large retailers are located within a convenience zone and choose not to participate in the redemption center, they must accept 350 containers per person per day. A large retailer who participates in a redemption center may refuse to redeem all containers if they are in the first convenience zone of a redemption center or must accept up to 24 containers if they are in the second convenience zone.

Large retailers are required to accept can and bottle returns for all brands and sizes of beverage containers for each type they sell. For example, if a store sells water, soft drinks, and beer, they are required to accept container returns of all brands and sizes of water, soft drinks, and beer, even for brand names they don't carry in their store, including private label or brands carried only by other stores. If a large retailer sells only water and soft drinks (and not beer), they are only required to accept back all brands and sizes of soft drinks and water (but not beer), even for brands of water and soft drinks they don't carry.

- Retailers under 5,000 square feet (generally a convenience store or other small retailer) that are not within a redemption center zone must accept up to 50 per person per day. Small retailers within a convenience zone must accept up to 24 per person per day.

Small retailers may accept back only brands and sizes they sell and must accept those types of containers even if the beverage was purchased at another store.

- Redemption centers must accept up to 350 containers per person per day. Redemption centers are required to accept all cans and bottles covered under the Bottle Bill. To see if a redemption center is located near you, please check the OLCC website for a [complete list](http://www.oregon.gov/OLCC/pages/bottle_bill.aspx) http://www.oregon.gov/OLCC/pages/bottle_bill.aspx.

What is a redemption center?

A redemption center is a staffed facility that has received approval from OLCC to accept empty containers from consumers. Stores with reverse vending machines are not considered to be a redemption center. Redemption centers are staffed and open 7 days per week 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, and offer hand count and 24-hour bag drop services.

OLCC has approved over 20 redemption centers in Oregon and are all independently operated by Oregon Beverage Recycling Cooperative (OBRC). To find a redemption center near you or for a list of each redemption center's participating retailers, check the OLCC website for a [complete list](http://www.oregon.gov/OLCC/pages/bottle_bill.aspx) http://www.oregon.gov/OLCC/pages/bottle_bill.aspx. For more information, go to the BottleDrop website: <https://www.bottledropcenters.com/>. You can also get information on pending redemption centers, if any, on OLCC's website: http://www.oregon.gov/OLCC/pages/bottle_bill.aspx.

What is a convenience zone?

Oregon Law allows for up to two "convenience zones" surrounding a redemption center. Large retailers (5,000 square feet or more) within a convenience zone may choose to participate in a redemption center or to provide equivalent services (including accepting up to 350 containers per person per day).

Participating large retailers located in the first convenience zone may refuse to redeem any containers and participating large retailers located in the second convenience zone must accept up to 24 containers per person per day.

Smaller retailers (under 5,000 square feet) within either redemption center convenience zone must accept up to 24 containers per person per day.

What containers can a store refuse to accept for refund?

Beyond the number limitations and types of beverage containers that may be accepted by large retailers, small retailers, and redemption centers that are discussed above, all stores and redemption centers may refuse to accept containers in certain situations:

- If there is reason to believe the beverage was not purchased in Oregon. The Oregon refund value applies only to containers sold in Oregon. The deposit is paid when a container is purchased in Oregon, and then the deposit is refunded when the container is returned.
- If the container visibly contains or is contaminated by a substance other than water, residue of the original contents, or ordinary dust. Customers are not required to wash their containers or to return them in any particular box or bag.

- If the container is damaged to the extent that you cannot see the brand and the Oregon refund marking. Stores and redemption centers cannot refuse to redeem cans simply because they are crushed.
- Stores and redemption centers are only required to accept beverage containers marked with the Oregon refund value in sizes that are three liters or less for water, soda, and beer. Beginning January 1, 2018, container sizes for the newly added beverages will be 4 ounces to 1.5 liters. Smaller or larger containers will not require a deposit.

Stores cannot refuse to accept containers simply because they don't have storage space or their reverse vending machines are not working properly. Oregon Law does not require stores to have reverse vending machines unless they are in a redemption center convenience zone and are providing equivalent services. If a reverse vending machine is not working or won't accept all required containers, store personnel must hand count returns.

What hours are a store required to take back my bottles/cans?

Retailers are required to accept container returns during all hours that the business is open.

If a store does not charge the consumer a deposit, do they have to accept containers returns and/or pay a refund?

Yes. The Oregon redemption must be paid to the consumer even if the store did not include a deposit in the retail price to the consumer.

I work with a non-profit and we accept empty beverage containers as a donation, but my store refuses to accept back more than 144 containers per person per day. Is there anything I can do so the non-profit group can get the deposits donated to it?

Large stores may refuse to accept back any containers or more than 24, 144, or 350 containers per person per day depending on their location and whether they participate in a redemption center. Small stores may refuse to accept back more than 24 or 50 containers per person per day, depending on their location (see the ***How many containers can I redeem each day?*** section above). Although stores are not required to take back more than the various numbers of containers, some stores will work with nonprofits to allow greater numbers of containers to be returned. Redemption centers may also accept more than 350 containers at one time from a non-profit by appointment. For more details, go to <https://www.bottledropcenters.com/>.

What is the penalty for not complying with Oregon's Bottle Bill?

Business owners may be subject to penalties and sanctions including license suspension and civil penalties of at least \$50 but not more than \$500. Each day a violation occurs constitutes a separate violation. Store clerks may be charged with a Class A misdemeanor

Who should I call if I want more information or to make a complaint about a business?

Becky Voelkel at 503-872-5132 or Bottle.Bill@oregon.gov