

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 those 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 is the refund value per container?

The Oregon refund value on redeemable containers is 10 cents.

What kinds of beverages are included in Oregon's Bottle Bill and have a 10-cent refund value?

The beverages listed below have a 10-cent refund value if they are in **glass, metal, or plastic bottles or cans** in the following sizes:

Three liters or less (these are beverages that were included in the Bottle Bill prior to January 1, 2018):

- waters
- carbonated soft drinks
- beer and malt beverages (includes alcoholic kombucha made with malt syrup; if it is made with cane sugar it is considered to be wine and is excluded from the Bottle Bill)

From 4 ounces up to and including 1.5 liters (these beverages were added to the Bottle Bill on January 1, 2018):

- other non-alcoholic beverages (includes but is not limited to tea, coffee, juice, energy and sports drinks, and non-alcoholic kombucha)
- other alcoholic beverages (includes but is not limited to hard cider up to 8.5% alcohol by volume; excludes distilled liquor and wine)
- marijuana beverages

For more details about the beverages that were added on January 1, 2018:

[Bottle Bill Expansion FAQs](#)

Why don't beverages in all types of containers have an Oregon refund value?

Oregon law specifically says beverages in cartons, foil pouches, drink boxes, and metal containers that require a tool to be opened do not have a refund value. Also, beverages in growlers and crowlers do not have a refund value because they are not factory

sealed. Only beverages in sealed glass, metal, or plastic bottles and cans are included in the Bottle Bill.

I was charged a deposit on an energy drink but it doesn't have OR 10¢ on it. Can a store do that? Can I redeem the bottle?

The beverages that were added to the Bottle Bill on January 1, 2018, including energy drinks, are not required to have OR 10¢ on their containers through December 31, 2018. Even without OR 10¢ on the container, retailers may charge a 10-cent deposit on those beverages and must pay the customer 10 cents per container when redeemed. Beginning January 1, 2019, any beverage container without OR 10¢ cannot legally be sold in Oregon.

What kinds of beverage containers must stores accept?

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

- 1) Waters
- 2) Carbonated soft drinks
- 3) All other non-alcoholic beverages (excluding dairy milk, plant-based milk, infant formula, and meal replacement beverages)
- 4) Beer and malt beverages
- 5) All other alcoholic beverages (excluding distilled liquor and wine)
- 6) Marijuana beverages

If a store sells any beverage in one of these categories, it must accept empties for all brands and sizes of beverages in that category even if they don't sell those specific brands or sizes. For example, if a store sells sports drinks, it must accept empty containers for every beverage in the "other non-alcoholic beverages" category, which includes juice, tea, coffee, smoothies, mixers, etc., even if it's another store's brand.

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 find the closest redemption center to you, please check the OLCC website for a complete list of redemption centers at http://www.oregon.gov/olcc/docs/bottle_bill/redemptioncenters.pdf.

How many containers must stores 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

How do I figure out if a store is in a redemption center zone?

Stores 5,000 or more square feet that participate in a redemption center or are exempt from providing equivalent services to a redemption center are listed on the OLCC Bottle Bill web page at http://www.oregon.gov/olcc/docs/bottle_bill/redemptioncenters.pdf. Stores under 5,000 square feet that are in a redemption center zone are required to have an OLCC notice posted (or a sign made by the store with equivalent information) saying they may limit returns to 24 containers per person per day (**see [Do stores have to poste any kind of sign about redeeming containers?](#)**) You can also contact OLCC at OLCC.BottleBill@oregon.gov if you want to know if a store is in a redemption center zone.

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

Stores must post signs with specific information on them in order to refuse dirty or damaged containers and to refuse more than the limits of containers listed in **[How many containers must stores accept each day?](#)** Oregon law requires stores to post these signs in each area where containers are received and that they be clearly visible to customers. 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 is a BottleDrop Redemption Center?

A BottleDrop Redemption Center is a staffed facility operated by the Oregon Beverage Recycling Cooperative (OBRC) that has received approval from OLCC to accept empty beverage containers from consumers. BottleDrop 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.

BottleDrop Redemption Centers accept the following number of containers per person (or per account for account holders who use the Green or Blue Bags):

Containers fed by a customer into a reverse vending machine	350
Hand counted by redemption center staff	50
Green Bags (personal accounts) counted by redemption center staff	2 bags
Blue Bags (fundraiser accounts) counted by redemption center staff	10 bags

Redemption centers will accept up to 10 Green Bags and up to 50 Blue Bags by prior arrangement. Call 877-912-2019 to schedule an appointment.

To find the closest redemption center to you, please check the OLCC website for a complete list of redemption centers at http://www.oregon.gov/olcc/docs/bottle_bill/redemptioncenters.pdf.

Stores with reverse vending machines or BottleDrop Express facilities are not BottleDrop Redemption Centers. Stores with a BottleDrop Express installed and stores in the surrounding area must continue to accept 50 or 144 containers per person per day.

What is a BottleDrop Express?

A BottleDrop Express is a facility with a drop door for BottleDrop account holders to drop off Green and Blue Bags of containers like at a BottleDrop Redemption Center, but are located at a retailer. OBRC picks up the full bags from the retailer, counts the containers, and credits the account holder's account with the refund value of the containers within 5 days, the same as at a redemption center.

Customers may deposit through the drop door up to two Green Bags, which are used for personal accounts, per account per day. Blue Bags are for fundraiser accounts, and customers may deposit through the drop door up to 10 Blue Bags per account per day.

BottleDrop Express facilities are not BottleDrop Redemption Centers and stores where the Express facilities are located and that are in the surrounding area must continue to accept 144 or 50 containers per person per day through the stores' reverse vending machines and/or by hand counting. These stores may not require that a customer open an account to return containers at the store.

Why should I open a BottleDrop account?

Having a BottleDrop account provides convenience. Account holders can drop off containers without having to feed them into a machine or wait for a hand count. Account holders may withdraw vouchers against the funds in their account to use at stores. A store designated as a PLUS location by OBRC allows account holders to withdraw vouchers for use in the store that are worth 20% more at that store, giving customers 12 cents per container returned.

Accounts are free to open, but bags are 20 cents each and sold in rolls of 10 at redemption centers and at BottleDrop Express retailers. The cost of bags bought at a redemption center will be deducted from the customer's BottleDrop account, but customers will need to pay the retailer for bags purchased from a BottleDrop Express retailer. There is a 35-cent processing fee for each bag that is dropped off, which will be deducted from the BottleDrop account.

How do I access money from my BottleDrop account?

Customers who deposit their containers into a reverse vending machine at a BottleDrop Redemption Center may collect cash for their containers at the redemption center or add the value of their redeemed containers to their BottleDrop account balance. BottleDrop account holders may access their funds and manage their accounts at kiosks located at BottleDrop Redemption Centers, at stores participating in a BottleDrop Redemption Center, and at retailers that house a BottleDrop Express.

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

As of October 2018, OLCC has approved 26 BottleDrop 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, go to the BottleDrop website at <https://www.bottledropcenters.com>. You can also view the application and public notice for pending redemption centers, if any, on OLCC's website at http://www.oregon.gov/OLCC/pages/bottle_bill.aspx.

Who do I contact with a complaint about a BottleDrop Redemption Center?

OBRC's customer service number is 877-912-2019. You can also email the customer service department at info@bottledropcenters.com.

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 those provided by the redemption center, including but not limited to accepting 350 containers per person per day at all hours the store is open, installing reverse vending machines, and providing a drop off service and associated accounting system for at least 125 containers per person per day. OLCC may approve a store for an exemption from providing equivalent services if the store sold fewer than 100,000 individual beverage containers during the prior calendar year.

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 and by posting the required sign from OLCC. To find out if you are in a redemption center zone and may limit returns to 24 containers, contact OLCC's Bottle Bill Program at OLCC.bottlebill@oregon.gov. OLCC will send you a sign showing that you may limit returns to 24 per person per day.

Can I redeem containers in Oregon that I bring in from another state?

No. 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, if a retailer has the appropriate sign posted (see [Do stores have to post any kind of sign about redeeming containers?](#)), it may refuse to accept containers where the brand cannot be identified and/or the Oregon refund value cannot be seen. However, check out [I was charged a deposit on an energy drink but it doesn't have OR 10¢ on it](#) for the temporary exception 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. No retailers currently fall within this category.

If a store's reverse vending machines are not working or are turned off and the store is open, stores must hand count container returns. Stores must also hand count containers that qualify for redemption that for some reason are rejected by the store's machines.

The increase in refund value to 10 cents and the expansion to most beverages has greatly increased redemption in Oregon and customers frequently encounter long lines to return containers. If a store's machines are working and there are lines, the customer will need to wait for their turn. If someone notices a customer using a machine beyond the limit for that store (usually 50 or 144, depending on the size of the store), the store's customer service department should be alerted. An alternative to waiting to use a store's machines is to return containers at a BottleDrop redemption center or BottleDrop Express location (see [Where can I find a BottleDrop Redemption Center or BottleDrop Express?](#)).

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?

If retailers have the required sign posted (see [Do stores have to post any kind of sign about redeeming containers?](#)), they may refuse to accept containers that contain foreign objects or liquids other than water or the residue of the original contents, or are caked with dirt or another substance. Customers cannot be required to wash their containers.

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.

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 in Oregon law for not having storage space or for being busy. However, as with customers who have to wait to make purchases, customers who are returning containers cannot always expect immediate attention.

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

No. Retailers that must accept containers (see [How many containers can I redeem each day?](#)) must accept them 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.

I am a retail store and need to have my empties picked up. Who do I call?

Distributors are required to pick up empty containers from retailers. If your distributor is a member of OBRC, call their Route Operations unit at 503-973-6956 and leave a detailed message. They will use information from these messages to plan their routes. Contact your distributor directly if it is not a member of OBRC.

I have a reverse vending machine that needs service. Who do I call?

Stores with reverse vending machines must do their own basic maintenance, including wiping down the tracks inside the machine a couple of times a day and emptying container bags as necessary. If maintenance is required beyond this basic maintenance, contact the vendor who you lease or bought your machine from. For machines serviced by OBRC, call 503-973-6969.

I have a BottleDrop kiosk in my store that needs service. Who do I call?

Stores with kiosks must do their own basic maintenance, like clearing simple jams and changing paper as necessary. If maintenance is required beyond this basic maintenance, call 503-542-5959.

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 nonprofit and we accept empty beverage containers as donations. 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 (see [What is a BottleDrop Redemption Center?](#)), 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 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 center 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.

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 [I was charged a deposit on an energy drink but it doesn't have OR 10¢ on it](#) for the temporary exception to labelling requirements.

Are there any reporting requirements under the Bottle Bill?

Distributors who sell beverages to retailers who sell beverages in sealed containers are required to report their beverage container sales and return data to the OLCC no later than July 1 of each year for the prior calendar year. The data must be calculated separately for glass, metal, and plastic beverage containers. OBRC will provide this report to OLCC for its member distributors.

Does the State of Oregon require an Initiator of Deposit registration?

No. Generally, the distributor initiates the deposit when delivering beverages to a retailer. The State of Oregon does not receive any proceeds from the deposits charged and does not require registration under the Bottle Bill.

Were the refund values raised 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