

Retailer Deposit Return Scheme FAQs

Do all Retailers have to register with the Deposit Return Scheme?

Yes. All Retailers that sell 'in scope' drinks – PET plastic bottles, aluminium/steel cans from 150ml to 3 litres – must register with Re-turn in order to fulfil their environmental and legislative responsibilities. Initial registration will open in late November 2022 and all Retailers will be provided with timelines to complete their registration.

What beverage containers are included in the Deposit Return Scheme?

PET plastic bottles and aluminium or steel cans between 150ml and 3 litres are included in the Deposit Return Scheme. All eligible containers will display the Re-turn logo making identification easy for consumers and retailers accepting manual returns.

How does the deposit fee work?

When the Retailer purchases in scope drinks from the Producer, they pay the cost of the drink plus a deposit fee on each unit. Retailers then sell the drink to the consumer and charge the cost of the drink plus the deposit fee. When the consumer finishes the beverage, they will return the empty, undamaged drinks container to the Retailer and receive a full refund on their deposit fee. The Deposit Scheme Operator pays the retailer for all refunded deposit fees. Therefore, the deposit fee goes full circle and is cost neutral for all involved.

Do I have to accept returns of all in scope drinks containers?

Yes. All registered Retailers will be required to accept Re-turn drinks containers regardless of where they were purchased or where the deposit was paid. Retailers will receive a Handling Fee for all containers they take back.

Are Retailers obliged to have a Reverse Vending Machine (RVM) to take back empty 'in scope' containers?

Retailers may opt for either manual return or for automatic collection, through Reverse Vending Machines (RVMs). Retailers have the choice of whether they opt for a reverse vending machine or not. It is not compulsory for any retailer to have a reverse vending machine.

Are Retailers compensated for accepting Deposit Return containers?

All Retailers are paid a 'Handling Fee' which ensures that the Deposit Return Scheme is cost neutral for them. It covers the associated costs of accepting and sorting drinks containers in the retail environment. The handling fee will be the same for plastic bottles and cans but will vary according to whether containers are collected manually or through a reverse vending machine.

Can retailers offer consumers the option to use the Deposit Fee refund for in-store purchase or donation to charity instead of a cash refund?

The Consumer will have the choice to use their refunded Deposit Fee against a store-bought purchase, receive in cash or put towards a charitable cause.

How do I accept Deposit Return drinks containers?

A Retailer will have two options when offering a take-back service for the empty beverage containers returned by consumers:

Manual collection or

Automatic collection through a Reverse Vending Machine (RVM)

The volume of sales (and expected returns) of beverage containers is a key driver in determining whether a Retailer should rely on manual collection or opt for automatic collection via RVMs.

How do manual returns work?

Consumers return the drinks container over the counter to the Retailer. The Retailer checks that the drinks container is empty, undamaged, features the Re-turn logo and that the barcode is clearly visible. The Consumer is then reimbursed the value of the Deposit. Re-turn reimburses the Retailer for all validated manual returns collected.

How should the accepted drinks containers be sorted and where should it be stored?

Manual collections will be stored in a barcoded bag provided by Re-turn, stored on premise until the collection driver arrives and scans the bag.

RVMs must be emptied when full. The barcoded bag must be sealed and stored on premise until the collection driver arrives who will scan the bag.

All bags and tags for use in both methods will be provided by Re-turn and storage options will be at the discretion of the retailer.

How often are the bags of empty drinks containers removed?

Manual and Automatic collection of material will operate 5-7 days a week. For larger Retailers, this may require a daily visit to collect material, while retailers operating manual returns may have collections twice per week, depending on volume.