



# RETAILER GUIDELINES FOR SELLING BEVERAGES UNDER OREGON'S BOTTLE BILL

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# OREGON'S BOTTLE BILL RETAILER OVERVIEW

Businesses that sell redeemable beverages in Oregon have certain requirements under Oregon's Bottle Bill depending on whether they are a retailer, distributor, manufacturer, or importer, and some businesses can and often are functioning as more than one of those business types.

Bottle Bill laws use the term dealer, rather than retailer or store, to include every person in Oregon who engages in the sale of sealed containers of redeemable beverages to consumers. The information below will use the term retailer and store interchangeably with dealer.

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## HOW THE OREGON REDEMPTION SYSTEM WORKS

By statute, the [Oregon Liquor and Cannabis Commission](#) (OLCC) administers Bottle Bill laws in Oregon. [Oregon Beverage Recycling Cooperative](#) (OBRC) is a cooperative owned by Oregon beverage distributors and is the state's designated distributor cooperative. It serves as the operational steward of Oregon's beverage container redemption system on behalf of its member distributors and operates the BottleDrop® network.

Oregon's Bottle Bill [statutes](#) and [administrative rules](#) don't require a deposit to be charged, although it's common practice for distributors to collect a deposit when they sell beverages to retailers and for retailers to charge a deposit when they sell beverages to consumers. Most distributors and retailers charge a deposit to build a fund to pay those refunds out of. While collecting a deposit is not required in statute, consumers are entitled to receive a 10-cent refund when they return redeemable containers to stores or redemption centers. Distributors are legally required to pick up their empties from stores and redemption centers and pay the stores and redemption centers that collected the empties 10 cents per container. OBRC picks up empty containers from stores around the state on behalf of its member distributors.

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## WHAT RETAILERS HAVE TO ACCEPT CONTAINER RETURNS IN OREGON?

Most businesses that sell beverages in sealed containers recognize themselves as retailers and understand they must accept empty beverage container returns, but others may not. It is important for a business to understand that some of their business activities, like selling sealed containers of redeemable beverages to consumers, puts them into the retailer category for Bottle Bill purposes even if that's a very small percentage of their sales.

Nearly every business in Oregon that sells qualifying beverages in redeemable sealed containers is legally required to accept container returns. The only ones that may legally refuse container returns are 5,000 or more square feet in size and participate in the first zone of a [full-service redemption center](#). All other Oregon retailers must accept container returns on all days and at all hours they are open. The number of containers they must accept is based on the location and square footage of the business.

## STORES 5,000 OR MORE SQ FT IN SIZE

Retailers that are 5,000 or more square feet in size (that are not within the first zone of a full-service redemption center and participating in that redemption center) must accept container returns of all brands and sizes for each kind of beverage they sell. Square footage is calculated using the entire footprint of a business, not just the retail floor, but excludes outdoor areas.

There are five kinds of beverages covered under the Bottle Bill:

- 1) Waters
- 2) Carbonated beverages
- 3) All other non-alcoholic beverages (excluding infant formula, liquid meal replacements, and dairy or plant-based milk if milk is listed as first ingredient)
- 4) Alcoholic beverages, including hard seltzer (excluding distilled liquor and wine)
- 5) Beverages containing marijuana or hemp

If a store 5,000 or more square feet sells any beverages in one of those 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., including beverages in that category that are from other store brands. Another example is that if a store doesn't hold a liquor license, they don't have to accept any beverage in the "alcoholic beverages" category, but they may accept them if they choose.

These larger retailers must accept the following number of containers per person per day on all days and at all hours they are open:

Not in a full-service redemption center zone	144
Not in a full-service redemption center zone and is a BottleDrop Express	144
Not in a full-service redemption center zone and is a "dealer redemption center"	24
In a full-service redemption center zone and is granted an exemption by OLCC	144
In a full-service redemption center zone and does not participate	350
Participates in Zone 1 of a full-service redemption center	0
Participates in Zone 2 of a full-service redemption center	24

## STORES UNDER 5,000 SQ FT IN SIZE

Retailers under 5,000 square feet may refuse to accept containers if they don't sell that brand or size. As for stores 5,000 or more square feet in size, square footage is calculated using the entire footprint of a business, not just the retail floor, but excludes outdoor areas.

If a store in this category sells a brand or size of beverage, they must accept the empty redeemable container even if the beverage was purchased at another store. As an example, if a store sells Coca Cola products but doesn't sell Coca Cola Cherry, staff must accept empty containers for Coca Cola Cherry because they sell Coca Cola brands.

Retailers that are under 5,000 square feet must always accept container returns on all days and at all hours they are open. By statute, they may not participate in a full-service redemption center, but may limit the number of returns based on their proximity to a full-service redemption center:

Not in a full-service redemption center zone	50
Not in full-service redemption center zone, but is a “dealer redemption center”	24
In Zone 1 or Zone 2 of a full-service redemption center	24

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## **DO STORES HAVE TO POST ANY KIND OF SIGN OR NOTICE ABOUT REDEEMING CONTAINERS?**

Effective January 1, 2023, retailers are legally required to post notices provided by OLCC where they are clearly visible to customers returning containers. These notices contain information on what a store may legally refuse to accept. The number of containers listed on each notice is the minimum number of containers a store must accept per person per day, not a maximum, and stores may accept as many containers over that minimum number as they choose.

Copies may be made of the notices, but the law requires that these notices not be modified in any way. The OLCC notice must be posted in each area where containers are accepted, such as in the area of a store’s reverse vending machines and where the store accepts hand counts, if that’s a separate area.

Stores may email staff in OLCC’s Bottle Bill Program at [OLCC.BottleBill@oregon.gov](mailto:OLCC.BottleBill@oregon.gov) to get the notice that meets the legal requirements for their store. Please include in the email the store’s tradename, address, and the square footage of the entire store (not just the retail space) and the appropriate notice will be emailed back.

The legal bases for refusing container returns are included on the notices. It is not legal to refuse container returns on the bases that a store is short on storage or storage is full, the store is short-staffed, the store is waiting for OBRC to pick up containers, etc.

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## **REVERSE VENDING MACHINES**

Self-serve reverse vending machines, also known as RVMs, are an option that can help retailers efficiently process the flow of containers returned to their stores. Having a reverse vending machine does not change the number of containers a store must accept per person per day, so store employees must hand count container returns if a store’s RVMs are turned off or are otherwise not available for returning containers. Store employees are responsible for daily maintenance of the machines, such as changing bags and cleaning.

It is not a state law, but stores may establish a policy that limits the amount of time for customers to cash out slips from the machines, such as the same day, within 24 hours, or within some other time frame. That store policy must be clearly posted in the area of the machines so customers are aware of it before they start feeding their containers into the machine.

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## **SETTING CONTAINER APPOINTMENTS**

Stores must accept container returns on all days and at all hours they are open, but may set up an appointment system for customers to return their containers. Stores cannot turn away a container return customer simply because they do not have an appointment, but must accept walk-in returns as time allows between appointments and when a customer doesn't show up for a scheduled appointment. Also, stores cannot require that appointments be made through an online or other system that requires a customer to have a phone or computer.

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## **WHAT DOES A STORE DO WITH THE EMPTY CONTAINERS IT COLLECTS?**

Distributors are required by law to pick up their empty containers that are returned to stores and pay the stores the refund value of the containers. OBRC Route Operations picks up empties from over 2,000 stores statewide on behalf of their member distributors. Retailers can contact OBRC Route Operations at 503-973-6956 or [roadmin@OBRC.com](mailto:roadmin@OBRC.com) to arrange to have collection supplies delivered to the store, to request a pickup and/or set up a pickup schedule, and for instructions on how to sort and store empty containers efficiently. In the case of distributors who have not become members of OBRC, retailers should contact those non-participating distributors directly to arrange for containers for which those distributors are responsible to be picked up. Stores cannot legally refuse to accept empty containers because their storage space is full or they are waiting for OBRC or an independent distributor to provide supplies or pick up their empties, so store management must plan accordingly, and reverse vending equipment can be helpful for compacting and storing containers in between pick-ups.

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## **HOW DO I KNOW IF A STORE IS IN A FULL-SERVICE REDEMPTION CENTER ZONE?**

Stores 5,000 or more square feet that participate in a full-service redemption center or are exempt from providing equivalent services to a redemption center, dealer redemption centers, and BottleDrop<sup>®</sup> Express locations are listed in the [Redemption Centers Complete List](#) posted on the OLCC Bottle Bill website. The list shows how many containers these stores must accept. Any larger store not on this list must accept 144 containers per person per day on all days and at all hours the store is open.

Stores under 5,000 square feet that are in a full-service redemption center zone are not included on the Redemption Centers Complete List, but retailers can contact OLCC at [OLCC.BottleBill@oregon.gov](mailto:OLCC.BottleBill@oregon.gov) to see if their store is in a full-service redemption center zone. When



notices are sent out to a store, OLCC staff double check to see if the store is in a full-service redemption center zone.

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## WHAT IS A FULL-SERVICE REDEMPTION CENTER?

A full-service redemption center is a staffed facility that has received approval from OLCC to accept empty beverage containers from consumers. All full-service redemption centers in Oregon are currently operated by the Oregon Beverage Recycling Cooperative (OBRC) and are called BottleDrop® redemption centers. Full-service redemption centers are staffed and open seven 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):

Individual containers returned through a machine	350/day
Containers hand counted by redemption center staff	50/day
Green Bags (personal accounts)	15 bags/quarter*
Blue Bags (fundraiser accounts)	10 bags/day**

Stores with reverse vending machines, dealer redemption centers, and BottleDrop® Express facilities are not full-service redemption centers.

\*Note: There is no quarterly limit for Green Bags returned at a dealer redemption center.

\*\*Note: Blue Bag fundraisers may make an appointment to drop off up to 50 bags at one time by emailing [fundraisers@bottledropcenters.com](mailto:fundraisers@bottledropcenters.com)

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## WHAT ARE BOTTLEDROP® EXPRESS LOCATIONS AND DEALER REDEMPTION CENTERS?

BottleDrop® Express locations and dealer redemption centers are facilities at a store that has drop doors for BottleDrop® account holders to drop off Green and Blue Bags of containers as they do at a BottleDrop® redemption center. OBRC picks up the full bags from the store, counts the containers, and credits the account holder's BottleDrop® account with the refund value of the containers within seven days, the same as at a redemption center.

BottleDrop® Express facilities are not full-service redemption centers. Stores where the Express facilities are located and stores 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 on all days and at all hours they are open. The exception to that requirement are stores with a BottleDrop® Express that are also a participant in a full-service redemption center. These stores may refuse all containers if in the first zone and may limit returns to 24 containers per person per day if in the second zone.

Dealer redemption centers, or DRCs, are also known as partner retailers. DRCs are stores that have partnered with OBRC under the requirements of [ORS 459A.741](#), which was enacted in the 2019 Oregon legislative session. DRCs look like a BottleDrop® Express, but Oregon law requires them to accept bag drop-offs from 8 AM to 8 PM and allows them to limit container returns to 24 containers per person per day, which they must accept on all days and at all hours they are open. A DRC will have a sign posted near the drop door that identifies it as a dealer redemption center.

While the bag drop off service at BottleDrop® Express locations and dealer redemption centers requires that a customer have an active BottleDrop® account to access the drop facility and drop off bags, these stores may not require that a customer have a BottleDrop account in order to return individual containers for their refund values (up to the relevant minimum/limit) at their store.

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## **LABELING REDEEMABLE CONTAINERS**

A common requirement for all beverage sellers, including retailers, is that [redeemable containers](#) must clearly indicate the Oregon refund value in order to legally be sold or offered for sale in Oregon. The Oregon refund value is currently 10 cents for each container redeemable under the Bottle Bill. UPCs are not legally required to be on redeemable beverage containers sold in Oregon, but containers that do not have a UPC or have a UPC but it is not uploaded into the statewide system will have to be hand counted when returned by a customer.

If a store has a redeemable beverage container that does not clearly indicate OR 10¢, they can add a sticker with that information as long as it is firmly affixed to the container. There is no size, style, font, or location requirement for the OR 10¢.

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## **STAYING INFORMED OF BOTTLE BILL CHANGES**

Oregon's Bottle Bill has been evolving since it was established in 1971. Water was added as redeemable in 2009, the refund value went from five to ten cents in 2017, and most beverages were added as redeemable in 2018. The law allowing for the establishment of dealer redemption centers was enacted in 2019. Recent changes in Bottle Bill laws add requirements for beverage distributors and has added wine in cans as redeemable beginning in 2025.

To ensure they have the latest information on Bottle Bill requirements, people can sign up for [email alerts](#) through the state of Oregon's GovDelivery system.

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# OREGON'S BOTTLE BILL CONTACTS

## FOR MORE INFORMATION ABOUT THE BOTTLE BILL CONTACT THE OLCC:

Bottle Bill: [OLCC.BottleBill@oregon.gov](mailto:OLCC.BottleBill@oregon.gov) or leave a message (503) 872-5132

Provide Feedback or Register a complaint by filing out our [online form](#)

## FOR MORE INFORMATION ABOUT THE OREGON BEVERAGE & RECYCLING COOPERATIVE:

Membership: [membership@obrc.com](mailto:membership@obrc.com) or (971) 233-6783

BottleDrop Express and DRCs: [retailrelations@obrc.com](mailto:retailrelations@obrc.com) or (503) 973-6983

Route Operations: [roadmin@OBRC.com](mailto:roadmin@OBRC.com) or (503) 973-6956

Field Services: [fsadmin@obrc.com](mailto:fsadmin@obrc.com) or (503) 973-6983

Customer Service: [customerservice@obrc.com](mailto:customerservice@obrc.com) or (503) 222-2266

Uploading UPCs into reverse vending machines:

[ORBottleBillRegistration@obrc.com](mailto:ORBottleBillRegistration@obrc.com) or 503-542-9036.