



Guidance Note – Deposit Return Scheme (DRS), Scotland

February 2023

Scotland's Deposit Return Scheme (DRS) will be introduced on 16th August 2023 and delivery of the scheme, as well as the pre-launch publicity campaigns, will be led by the Scheme Administrator, Circularity Scotland Ltd (CSL). Below are some of the key aspects which you need to start considering taken from the below websites

What is the DRS?

Scotland is introducing a deposit return scheme (DRS). This means when you buy a drink in a single-use container you will pay a 20p deposit, which you get back when you return your empty bottle or can. The scheme is designed to encourage the return of empty single-use containers for collection for recycling. It will help to tackle climate change, increase quantity and quality of materials collected for recycling, and decrease litter.

The Regulations

The Deposit and Return Scheme for Scotland Regulations 2020 set out the legal requirements of the scheme. They apply to drink producers, drink importers and anyone marketing or offering for sale drinks in Scotland packaged in a single-use container made from PET plastic, glass, steel or aluminium sized between 50ml and 3 litres. In the Regulations these are called scheme articles. You may also see them being referred to as scheme containers.

How does this affect me?

If your business serves drinks in single-use glass, metal or PET plastic containers for customers to **consume off the premises**, you must charge a deposit and operate a return point for consumers to return any container included in Scotland's Deposit Return Scheme. Because some of your containers will be going off-site and going to other return points you have a legal responsibility to accept containers that are presented to you (even if not purchased from your location)

As a retailer you must:

- only sell drinks from registered producers;
- charge the 20p deposit when selling a drink that is part of the scheme;
- make it clear to the customer that the drink is part of the scheme and a deposit applies;
- clearly display the price of the deposit (20p) in any place that a drink is displayed for sale;
- clearly display information on how the customer can redeem the deposit;
- operate a return point (unless exempt) or takeback service
- store returned empty containers in a safe way, following the Duty of Care code of practice

If your customers only **consume the drinks you sell on site** and you collect all the containers, you can operate what's known as a closed loop system. This means you can choose not to charge customers a deposit and recover the 20p you pay your wholesaler or producer by getting containers collected directly by the scheme administrator. This also means you don't have to operate a public return point.

If the only drinks you sell on your premises are from a [vending machine](#) you do not need to operate a return point. You will have to meet all other retailer obligations, including:

- charging the 20p deposit when selling a drink that is part of the scheme;
- making it clear to the customer that the drink is part of the scheme and the deposit applies;

- displaying information on how the customer can redeem the deposit.

What about the additional cost/time if a return point?

You'll receive a handling fee for the containers you accept to cover the extra costs of meeting the scheme's requirements

Purchasing from Wholesaler/Producer

Wholesaler/producers will charge a 20p deposit on each scheme article made available for retail sale in Scotland

What next?

If you become a return point, you will need to register with Circulatory Scotland so they can arrange for collections of returned containers. They will also need to reimburse you for the deposits you will have paid out and you'll be due handling fees to cover any costs incurred operating the return point.

Exemptions (via Zero Waste Scotland)

Proximity Exemption - You may apply for a Proximity Exemption if you have an agreement with another nearby return point, to act on your behalf.

Environmental Health Exemption - You may apply for an Environmental Health Exemption if you can demonstrate that operating a return point would mean you would be in breach of other legislation, such as environmental health, food or fire safety.

Timeframes

March 2023 - Return Point Operator Registration Begins

16 August 2023, Scotland's Deposit Return Scheme will go live, consumers will start paying a 20p deposit at point of purchase.

For further information:

[Deposit Return Scheme | Circularity Scotland Ltd](#)

[Zero Waste Scotland – Deposit Return Scotland](#)

[SEPA – Scotland Deposit Return Scheme](#)