

Bottle Bill of Rights

You have certain rights under the New York State Returnable Container Act:

- ➔ The right to return your empties for refund to any dealer who sells the same brand, type and size, whether you bought the beverage from the dealer or not. It is illegal to return containers for refund that you did not pay a deposit on in New York State.
- ➔ The right to return your empties any day, any hour, except for the first and last hour of the dealer's business day. Empty containers may be redeemed at any time in 24-hour stores.
- ➔ The right to return your containers if they are empty and intact. Washing containers is not required by law, but is strongly recommended to maintain sanitary conditions.

Updated 2/21



Dear Friend,

Good news for the environment—the New York State Returnable Container Act (the “Bottle Bill”) continues to help us create a cleaner, healthier New York. The Bottle Bill greatly reduces roadside container litter and helps recycle billions of beverage containers each year at no cost to local governments.

I'd be glad to hear your comments or suggestions on how we might further improve the law in the future.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Carl E. Heastie".

Carl E. Heastie
Speaker of the Assembly

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New York State's Returnable Container Law

The law:

- ➔ Requires stores to post a "New York Bottle Bill of Rights" sign at the point of sale
- ➔ Allows a dealer that is open less than 24 hours to restrict or refuse the payment of deposit refunds during the first and last hours of operation
- ➔ Enforcement includes the Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC), the Department of Agriculture and Markets, the Department of Taxation and Finance, the state Attorney General and local governments
- ➔ A retailer operating 10 or more stores in New York State engaged in the same general field of business under common ownership must install and maintain, unless alternative technology has been approved by DEC, a certain number of reverse vending machines (RVMs) based on the store's square footage:

- More than 40,000 square feet and less than 60,000 square feet must install at least two RVMs
- 60,000 square feet or more and less than 85,000 square feet must install at least three RVMs

- 85,000 square feet or more must install at least four RVMs
- Does not apply to stores selling only individual, refrigerated containers of 20 ounces or less

The consumer

The consumer pays a 5-cent deposit when purchasing beverages such as beer, soda and wine coolers and gets that deposit back when returning the containers.



A consumer can return empty containers – glass, metal or plastic – to any store or vendor that sells the same size, type and brand of container. If a store does not carry a particular size or type of container, then the store is not required to redeem that container.

It's helpful to rinse containers before returning them for a deposit refund.

Labeling

Beverage manufacturers must place the necessary deposit information on all of their containers. The information must be permanently embossed or

painted on the containers or printed as part of the product label on the container. It must appear on the top of cans and on the side of bottles. The names of other states with similar deposit legislation may also be included on the refund label.

Refusal of acceptance of a beverage container

Dealers may refuse to accept the following:

- any container that does not properly indicate a refund value
- broken bottles or crushed containers
- corroded or dismembered cans
- beverage containers that contain a significant amount of foreign material, such as paper, sticks or cigarette butts. Small amounts of dust, dirt or moisture are allowed. Although helpful, containers don't have to be rinsed.

A dealer must not knowingly redeem an empty beverage container on which a deposit was never paid in New York State.

What beverages are covered by NY's Bottle Bill?

- ➔ **Carbonated soft drinks**, including sparkling water, carbonated energy drinks, carbonated tea and carbonated juice, which is anything less than 100 percent juice that contains sugar or water
- ➔ **Soda water**
- ➔ **Beer** and other malt beverages
- ➔ **Mineral water**, both carbonated and non-carbonated
- ➔ **Wine coolers**
- ➔ **Water**, including flavored or nutritionally enhanced water that does not contain sugar



What beverages are NOT covered by NY's Bottle Bill?

- ✗ Milk products
- ✗ Wine, liquors and hard ciders
- ✗ Non-carbonated tea and juice
- ✗ Non-carbonated sports and energy drinks
- ✗ Drink boxes or pouches
- ✗ Waters containing sugar

For more information contact the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation, Bureau of Waste Reduction & Recycling, 625 Broadway, Albany, NY 12233-7253
email: nybottle@dec.ny.gov; dec.ny.gov/chemical/8500.html; complaint line: 877-846-8802