



Scotland's Deposit Return Scheme

Exemptions and Voluntary Return Point FAQs

If you are looking for information on whether you might be eligible for an exemption or a voluntary return and how to apply, please read our application guideline documents.

- Proximity exemption guidance [here](#)
- Environmental health exemption guidance [here](#)
- Voluntary return point guidance [here](#)

I have multiple stores – do I need to submit more than one application?

If you have multiple stores, you would be advised to speak to us first and we can advise on how to submit your application. Please contact us at: DRS.ExemptionsEnquiries@zerowastescotland.org.uk.

Can I submit a paper application?

Yes, you can. Please email us at DRS.ExemptionsEnquiries@zerowastescotland.org.uk

Alternative Return Points

How do I estimate the number of containers an alternative return point will receive?

Once Scotland's Deposit Return Scheme starts, return points looking for an exemption will be able to enter the average number of eligible bottles and cans they receive.

For now, please enter the approximate number of eligible bottles and cans you sell on a monthly basis.

What to do if your circumstances have changed

I've changed my mind – can I / how do I revoke my exemption?

If you wish to withdraw your application, or to revoke your previously granted exemption, please contact DRS.Applications@zerowastescotland.org.uk

I'm moving premises – does my exemption come with me?

The exemption granted is in relation to the retail premises named on the application and under the conditions stated on the application. Therefore, if you move premises you will need to re-apply, if you still want an exemption for the new premises.

You are required by law to notify the Scottish Ministers of a material change in circumstances, which includes change of ownership or closing of a shop.

The alternative return point that has agreed to accept returns on my behalf is closing / moving / changing ownership – do I need to apply again?

In this case, your first step is to notify the Scottish Ministers of the material change in circumstances. If you are able to, provide details of a new alternative return point in the same format as in your original application. If the new alternative return point is sufficient and there have been no other material changes in circumstances, your exemption should remain in place. If not, you will have to submit a fresh application.

Proximity exemptions

Is there any leeway on the proximity eligibility?

It is important that everyone in Scotland has easy access to a return point. That is why proximity-based exemptions will only be granted where there is an alternative return point nearby.

In your application form, you will have the opportunity to provide further information in support of your application, that may be considered.

Do I have to apply for an exemption?

If you are required to be a return point operator under Scotland's Deposit Return Scheme but wish to be exempt and meet the criteria, you must complete an exemption application. Find out more about retailer obligations [here](#).

If I get an exemption, do I still need to charge a deposit?

Yes. All drinks sold in scheme containers must carry a 20p deposit. If you receive an exemption to act as a return point, you will still have to meet your other requirements as part of the scheme. These include:

- Charging the deposit when selling in-scope products
- Making it clear the container is part of the scheme
- Displaying the deposit value separately from the product price

Voluntary Return Points

Am I allowed to offer a return point if I wish to?

Anyone who wishes to operate a return point that doesn't have a statutory duty to do so must apply to register as a voluntary return point operator. You can find out more and apply on our [voluntary return point](#) page.

I am the manager of a retail park, shopping centre or transport hub. Can I help the retail units on my site?

To help the retail units on your site, you could consider becoming an alternative return point. To find out more about becoming an alternative return point, please visit our dedicated page about voluntary return point applications [here](#).

Do I have to accept all scheme containers?

Yes, once registered as a voluntary return point operator you will be legally required to comply with the obligations placed on all return point operators, including to accept all in-scope containers, including PET plastic bottles, steel and aluminium cans and glass bottles.

I'm concerned that I might receive more containers that I can take back. What would I do?

You will be able to refuse a single proposed return by a customer if it contains a number of bottles and cans that is disproportionately greater than the number you would normally sell in a single transaction.

Retailers not required to operate a return point

Are there any retailers that don't have to operate a return point?

The requirement to operate a return point does not apply to the following retailers (and therefore they do not need to apply for an exemption):

- export shops
- hospitality outlets that sell drinks exclusively for on-site consumption
- premises that only sell scheme articles by way of distance sales
- premises that only sell scheme articles through a vending machine
- premises granted an exemption.

Nevertheless, other obligations relating to Scotland's Deposit Return Scheme will apply in relation to these premises.

Completing your application

Is there a deadline for applying?

There is no deadline for you to submit an application. Applications will remain open when the scheme goes live on 1 July 2022.

If you are not granted an exemption before the scheme starts, you will have to allow yourself time to prepare to become a return point for the scheme going live on 1 July 2022. As a result, you should make sure you leave yourself sufficient time to prepare. Find out more about retailer obligations [here](#).

Can I save my application and come back to it?

You must complete your application in one sitting, as there is no option to save your application and return to it at a later point. As a result, you are strongly advised to gather all the information that is required first, draft your text in a separate document and copy and paste when you are confident you have all the information ready to submit. There is no time limit for completing the form, it will not 'time out'.

Support with your application

Do you provide advice on environmental health?

Zero Waste Scotland is not able to provide any technical advice.

Can I appeal the decision?

There is no specific procedure provided to appeal a decision. However, if your situation has changed, or if you have additional evidence that would support your application, you are welcome to submit a new application.

How do I make a complaint?

You can make a complaint about the way Zero Waste Scotland has handled your application by emailing DRS.Complaints@zerowastescotland.org.uk. Our [complaints procedure](#) can be found on the Zero Waste Scotland website.

You can make a complaint about an application decision made by the Scottish Ministers by emailing sgcomplaints@gov.scot. Further information about the [complaints procedure](#) can be found on the Scottish Government website.

I have a question that I can't find the answer to – who can I speak to?

All enquiries should be directed to DRS.ExemptionsEnquiries@zerowastescotland.org.uk.