

Ireland is waking up to our first ever Deposit Return scheme this morning. To find out more about how it will all work, the hopes for the project and how you can help make a difference to the climate, series producer Ethna Quirke caught up with Niamh Kelly of Re-Turn to find out more.

The operator of the nationwide scheme, Re-turn, is advising that only bottles and cans purchased after 1 February are eligible for a deposit refund, as these drinks containers will have had a deposit charged.

From today onwards, when consumers purchase a drink in a plastic bottle or aluminium can featuring the Re-turn logo, they will pay a fully refundable deposit in addition to the price of the drink. When the empty and undamaged drinks containers are returned to participating shops and supermarkets nationwide, consumers will receive their full deposit refund.

Consumers can return these empty undamaged drinks containers to shops and supermarkets either through a Reverse Vending Machine (RVM) or manually, over the counter.

Re-turn has useful guidance for consumers as we approach this date.

When will I pay a deposit? From 1 February onwards, drinks in plastic bottles and cans with the Re-turn logo will start to appear in shops and supermarkets nationwide. These drinks containers will require the purchaser to pay a fully refundable deposit in addition to the price of the product. When finished your drink, you can return your empty undamaged container to any participating shop or supermarket nationwide.

What will I pay? A deposit of 15 cents will apply to each container from 150ml - 500mls and a deposit of 25 cents for containers over 500ml to 3 litres.

Where can I return my bottle and cans? The majority of retailers across the country have now registered for the Deposit Return Scheme and have set up their deposit return points. Consumers can return their empty undamaged plastic bottles and cans to participating shops and supermarkets nationwide. either through a Reverse Vending Machine (RVM) or manually, over the counter.

From 1 February our website www.re-turn.ie will feature a map that indicates where to find deposit return points.

How will I get my deposit back? Consumers receive the deposit back when they return the plastic bottle or can with the Re-turn logo that is empty and undamaged to participating shops and supermarkets nationwide. If through a reverse vending machine, consumers will be issued a voucher that can be redeemed at the till against store purchases or as a cash refund. If over the counter, retailers must check the drinks container features the Re-turn logo and is undamaged and then provide a refund. Consumers are advised not to crush or squeeze the plastic bottles and cans.

Can I still use my own recycling bins to dispose of plastic bottles?

While all consumers should use their recycling bins for mixed dry recyclables, we would ask that consumers return their plastic bottles and cans with the Re-turn logo to local participating shops and supermarkets to redeem their deposit.

The separate collection of these plastic bottles and cans guarantees a high quality recycle material is returned and recycled and there is no cross contamination. The introduction of Deposit Return is a proven method of increasing recycling rates, with great success in a number of other European countries.

What is not included in the scheme?

Not every drinks container is eligible for Deposit Return. Only drinks containers in PET plastic bottles, aluminium & steel cans from 150ml to 3 litres are included in the Scheme. All containers included in the Scheme will feature the Re-turn logo.

Items that are not included in the deposit return scheme include:

- Any dairy drinks products in plastic containers or cartons e.g. milk, yogurt drinks
- Steel and tin cans that contain foodstuffs
- Containers for cleaning supplies

These items should continue to be disposed of in a recycling bin.

Glass drinks containers are also not included in the scheme and should be recycled as usual and brought to a glass and bottle bank.

Why is Ireland launching a Deposit Return Scheme?

The Deposit Return Scheme is a practical circular economy initiative that aims to create a closed-loop recycling system guaranteeing the material is returned and recycled. The EU has set Ireland a target to separate and collect 77% of plastic beverage bottles by 2025. This target will rise to 90% in 2029. We currently recycle approximately 60% of drinks containers and Deposit Return is a proven method of increasing recycling rates, with great success in a number of other European countries.

Re-turn has created an [FAQ page](#) on the website for any questions which consumers may have, and they are strongly encouraged to reach out to info@re-turn.ie if they have any further queries.

Resources:

www.return.ie

www.ourstoprotect.ie