



BOTTLE BILL: FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

IOWA'S CAN AND BOTTLE DEPOSIT SYSTEM

ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES DIVISION | WWW.IOWADNR.GOV

The store or redemption center refuses to take my empty cans and bottles.

Stores must redeem Iowa empties of the products it sells (the same kinds, sizes and brands). However, a store can use an approved redemption center that's certified by the Iowa DNR in place of accepting cans and bottles at their store – look for a prominently displayed Iowa DNR certificate that lists the store's approved redemption center. That redemption center must redeem the products sold by that store. If the store or approved redemption center refuses to take the products sold by the store, it is a simple misdemeanor (see Iowa Code sections 455C.2, 455C.3 and 455C.12) and should be reported to your local police or sheriff's department.

The store or redemption center said my empties were not in good condition.

Stores and redemption centers only have to redeem cans and bottles that are reasonably clean, dry and intact. They can lawfully refuse filthy or smashed empties, or empties that have more than a minimum of liquid in them.

I have cans and bottles I purchased in another state.

You can only get an Iowa refund on a deposit that was paid in Iowa. If a person is from out-of-state, a store or redemption center can lawfully require an Iowa receipt showing the person bought the beverages in Iowa. We suggest recycling out-of-state empties instead.

I have a large amount of cans or bottles to return.

Keep in mind that stores cannot limit a person to fewer than 120 empties a day, and redemption centers cannot limit a person to fewer than 500 per day.

The redemption center or store is not giving me the full 5 cent refund.

If a store or redemption center agrees to redeem your empty cans and bottles but does not pay you the 5 cent refund for each item, it's a simple misdemeanor (see Iowa Code sections 455C.2, 455C.3 and 455C.12) and should be reported to your local police or sheriff's department. Stores or redemption centers paying less than 5 cents can be fined up to \$625.

I'm not sure if I can return a certain kind of can or bottle.

Cans and bottles covered by a deposit and that can be returned for a refund include products that are carbonated, alcoholic or mineral water (including non-carbonated), and are sold in glass, plastic or metal bottles or cans (see Iowa Administrative Code section 567—107.3). Stores needing "IA-5¢" stickers (for alcoholic liquor bottles only) can contact the Iowa Alcoholic Beverages Division at https://abd.iowa.gov/sites/default/files/documents/2015/11/listing_manual_final042215.pdf or contact Nicole Scebold at (515) 281-7416.

I want to open a new redemption center.

To get started, complete and submit the Redemption Center Registration and Approval Form (542-1215). You may want to reference the Registration and Approval Form Instructions, which have some guidelines on several redemption center models.

If you want to apply to be an approved redemption center to take empties on behalf of stores, be sure to follow the Registration Checklist for "Approved" Redemption Centers. Then contact the DNR at 515-725-8200 for a suggested form to complete with those retailers.

You will also need to contact local beverage distributors to arrange pickup of redeemed empties and discuss reimbursements and handling fees. You may want to ask local retailers for contact information on distributors.

I'd like to see changes made to Iowa's beverage deposit law ("Bottle Bill").

Only the Iowa Legislature, with the approval of the governor, can make changes to Iowa Code Chapter 455C, often known as the "Bottle Bill."