

TOMRA helps Irish retailers get ready for Deposit Return Scheme launch on 1 February

Shoppers can soon return drink containers for recycling to retailers selling beverages

31 January 2024



Ireland will launch a new Deposit Return Scheme (DRS) for drink container recycling tomorrow on 1 February, to boost recycling rates, tackle litter and drive a circular economy. Under the DRS, empty drink containers are returned to retailers for recycling. Ireland is the 16th country in Europe to implement a DRS.

The DRS will see consumers pay a deposit when purchasing a drink, which is fully refunded when they return the empty container to any retailer that sells beverages – making recycling part of existing shopping routines and ensuring a broad and convenient network of return points. The refund can be redeemed as cash or in-store credit at the retail store where the containers are returned. Irish retailers can choose to handle container returns manually or automate collection through a [reverse vending machine](#) (RVM).



“Collecting drink containers for recycling is an opportunity to bring shoppers into your store,” said Truls Haug, Head of TOMRA Collection United Kingdom & Ireland. “It offers another customer touchpoint, increasing footfall and increasing revenue for your business – with research showing [87% of recyclers](#) spend their deposit refund in store. Offering a great recycling experience can draw customers to your store and keep them coming back.”

TOMRA is the global leader in reverse vending, with over 50 years’ experience building RVMs and working in deposit systems across all parts of the value chain. [TOMRA Collection Ireland](#) was established in January 2023 and today has an organization of 28 people, with more than three quarters of the team working in customer service and field service.

[Nine out of 10](#) of the world’s highest-performing DRSs see consumers return drink containers to retail locations. DRSs see [up to 98%](#) of drink containers returned for recycling, with no other waste collection systems reaching similar rates. More than 50 markets around the world now have DRSs in place.

Truls Haug, Head of TOMRA Collection United Kingdom & Ireland

“Consumers are more eco-conscious than ever, and participating in the DRS also provides a great opportunity for retailers to engage with their customers on something they care about,” adds Peter Whelan, Sales Manager. “Retailers contribute to cleaning up communities and demonstrate their commitment to sustainability, which can have reputational benefits and drive shopper loyalty. As the locations where consumers both buy and return containers, retailers are at the heart of deposit return.”



TOMRA Collection office in Dublin

TOMRA's approximately 82,000 RVMs in over 60 markets collect more than 45 billion drink containers for recycling each year. TOMRA Collection in Ireland provides RVM infrastructure and advises retailers on DRS requirements and the most suitable RVMs based on store needs. The call centre in Dublin is open seven days a week so that it is available during retail business hours, and the fully trained service engineers work in house at TOMRA. TOMRA also has dedicated service technicians and business managers based locally in each region of Ireland.

A deep dive into Ireland's Deposit Return Scheme

As a circular economy initiative, Ireland's DRS seeks to build a closed-loop system to ensure that drink containers can be recycled into new containers again and again. The separate return of drink containers reduces exposure to other kinds of waste, to ensure the quality and purity of collected material streams. The new DRS also strives to achieve the targets of the European Union's [Single-Use Plastics Directive](#), which requires member states like Ireland to separately collect 90% of plastic drink containers for recycling by 2029, with an interim goal of 77% by 2025.

According to Re-turn, approximately [1.9 billion](#) drink cans and bottles are consumed each year in Ireland, with [over 30%](#) going unrecycled. The new DRS in Ireland covers all drinks (excluding dairy) in cans and PET bottles, ranging from 0.15 to 3 litres in size. On purchasing a beverage, consumers pay a deposit of €0.15 for containers 0.15 to 0.5 litres in size, and €0.25 for those over 0.5 litres. Eligible drink containers will feature the logo of DRS operator Re-turn, an organisation formed by retailers and beverage producers.

All retailers that sell eligible drinks must register with Re-turn, and stores may be subject to fines if they are not compliant. Re-turn pays retailers for all refunded deposits, so that the deposit is cost neutral. Retailers are also compensated for participating, with a handling fee to cover costs associated with receiving and storing containers. There are also financial grants available for retailers.

The roll-out of the DRS includes a transition period. Retailers can start selling drink containers with the Re-turn logo from 1 February, and after 31 May all drink containers sold must have the Re-turn logo. Consumers get back a refund only if a deposit was paid for that container.

For more information about Ireland's upcoming DRS and reverse vending, retailers can contact TOMRA via collection.tomra.com/en-ie/.

For further imagery, interview requests or further questions, please contact zara.lauder@tomra.com.

About TOMRA Collection:

TOMRA Collection provides reverse vending machines to enable Deposit Return Schemes for drink container recycling. The company's solutions collect aluminum and plastic beverage containers to be continually reused and recycled back into new bottles and cans. With approximately 82,000 installations across more than 60 markets, TOMRA reverse vending machines capture over 45 billion used bottles and cans each year. This reduces reliance on raw materials, and ensures fewer containers end up in streets, oceans and landfills. TOMRA's reverse vending machines, digital solutions and service make recycling easy for the industry, system owners, retailers and consumers to contribute to a more sustainable planet. Visit our website, and follow us on [LinkedIn](#).