



STORE OBLIGATIONS TO TAKE BACK BEVERAGE CONTAINERS

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CONNECTICUT BOTTLE BILL SYSTEM

A store's obligation to take back beverage containers is specified in a law establishing a process for collecting and managing them (i.e., the bottle bill). The law generally requires:

1. a retailer to pay a beverage container distributor 5 cents for each beer or malt beverage, soft drink, or water container that the distributor delivers;
2. a consumer to pay the retailer 5 cents for each container that he or she purchases;
3. the retailer or a redemption center to pay the consumer 5 cents for each container the consumer returns;
4. the distributor to reimburse the retailer or redemption center 5 cents for each container returned, plus a handling fee of either 1.5 or 2 cents depending on the type of container involved; and
5. the distributor to pay the State of Connecticut the 5 cents for each unclaimed deposit (CGS §§ [22a-243](#) to [22a-246](#)).

ISSUE

What are a store's obligations to take back beverage containers under Connecticut's beverage container redemption law ("bottle bill")?

SUMMARY

Connecticut's bottle bill generally requires stores to take back the empty containers of the kind, size, and brand of beverage that they sell ([CGS § 22a-245\(b\)](#)). But it sets conditions under which a store does not have to accept an empty beverage container.

Stores that use reverse vending machines to take back beverage containers must, under state regulations, ensure that the machines are available for consumers during the stores' normal business hours. ("Reverse vending machines" are automated machines that accept empty containers and dispense cash or credit slips.) If the machines are not working or unavailable for other reasons, the stores must have an alternate method to take back the containers (Conn. Agencies Regs. §§ [22a-245-2](#) and [22a-245-4](#)).

A violation of the law is punishable by a fine of \$50 to \$100 for a first offense, \$100 to \$200 for a second offense, and \$250 to \$500 for subsequent offenses ([CGS § 22a-246](#)).



TAKE BACK EXCEPTIONS

A store is not required to take back a beverage container (1) with material inside that is not the container's normal contents (e.g., cigarette butts) or (2) that is missing a label with the state's name or abbreviation and an indication that the container has a refund value.

It may also avoid taking back containers on premises by (1) sponsoring, on its own or with others, a redemption center located within one mile of the store that takes back containers of the kind, size, and brand the store sells or (2) being located within one mile of an independent redemption center that takes back containers of the kind, size, and brand it sells.

If a store stops selling a kind, size, or brand of beverage, it must (1) continue to take back the empty beverage containers for at least 60 days after the last sale of the discontinued kind, size, or brand and (2) provide customers with at least 60 days' notice of the last day that it will take these containers back ([CGS § 22a-245\(b\)](#)).

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