



FACT SHEET

Handling fees in deposit return systems

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Handling fees in deposit return systems

- › As compensation for collecting, sorting, and handling empty drinks containers from consumers, deposit return systems offer per unit handling fees to redemption point operators (i.e., retailers redemption centres, and/or depots) to cover their costs.
- › In a best practice system, handling fees vary depending on material type, method of collection (manual or automated), type of collection point (retailer or stand-alone redemption centre/depot), and whether the containers are commingled or compacted.

Introduction

A redemption network that is easy, accessible, and fair for all consumers is one of the key drivers of high return rates in a deposit return system (DRS). While a retail-based collection model is recognised as the gold standard of convenience, the next best option is a hybrid model, where privately owned redemption centres operate alongside retail stores to facilitate the return of empty containers.

In either model, retailers and/or redemption centres are typically paid for their take-back services in the form of a “handling fee.” Generally, these fees are paid by the system operator, or by the bottler or distributor directly to the collection point.¹ In jurisdictions where the government is responsible for system operations, like in California, handling fees are sometimes paid by the state.

Aside from an effective minimum deposit value, handling fees are a critical part of what make deposit systems work well, particularly in jurisdictions where retailers face no legal obligation to take back containers. Handling fees are intended to act as compensation for the costs associated with collecting and sorting returned containers, such as those related to investments in extra labour (for manual collection) or for the purchasing or leasing of reverse vending machines (RVMs), in the case of automated collection. On a long-term basis, they’re also intended to cover expenses related to space requirements or overhead costs like site maintenance and electricity.

¹ In some jurisdictions (e.g., Romania, the Netherlands), commercial food service establishments (also known as HORECA) that sell beverages for on-site consumption also receive handling fees to ease the additional cost of sorting and preparing containers for collection. This is only the case in jurisdictions which require such establishments to serve as collection points.

In a best practice DRS, handling fees are:

- › Not fixed in legislation
- › Based on a thorough assessment of the actual costs incurred by retailers and redemption centres
- › Reviewed at set periods, either annually or biannually, by the central system administrator (CSA) in consultation with redemption point operators
- › Structured in a way that considers opportunities to generate efficiency savings within the system, which can help reduce costs for brand owners
- › Differentiated based on whether container collection is manual or automated
- › Structured in a way that accounts for the fact that different types of containers incur different handling and storage costs

Handling fees calculated according to these best practice principles result in:

- › A convenient collection network: Ensures returning containers is as easy as purchasing beverages
- › Coverage of costs: Adequately covers the expenses incurred by redemption point operators
- › Sustainable and reasonable profit margins for redemption centres
- › Enhanced consumer experience: Leads to improved services and a better experience for consumers
- › Higher return rates

What factors need to be considered when setting handling fees?

In Europe and other jurisdictions with high-performing deposit systems, CSAs are usually responsible for setting handling fees in a way that progressively encourages cost-efficient investments by the redemption location. In determining the handling fee, the key considerations centre on how the containers are recovered (i.e., manually or automatically), where they are recovered (i.e., retailer or redemption centre/depot), and what materials the containers are made of. Each of these factors is examined in further detail below.

Container type

Like the level of the deposit, handling fees can vary according to the container type. Different containers take up different amounts of space at redemption locations (e.g., plastic vs. aluminium) or may be more difficult to handle (e.g., glass).

Retailer vs. depot

Retailer and redemption centre (depot) costs will vary according to their location, with differing wage rates and rents, and with their throughput, with higher volumes in urban areas delivering better economies of scale. In general, however, handling fees paid to stand-alone depots (which are more commonplace in Canada and the United States) are much higher than those paid to retailers because they must compensate for the entire costs of the facility and labour, as opposed to the costs incurred by retailers which represent only a marginal increase in operating cost in terms of dedicated space, labour, etc.

In some jurisdictions, such as Oregon (US), retailers do not receive handling fees, which has resulted in a slow shift out of retail and towards depots and express drop-off locations, sometimes located near a retailer instead.

Commingling agreements

Commingling means the sorting of drinks containers by container type and size rather than by brand in accordance with the requirements of an approved commingling agreement. Commingling saves redemption locations significant space and time, reducing the strain on space and staffing capacity, which helps to make their business economically viable.

In Vermont (US), retailers and redemption centre operators receive a handling fee of USD\$0.035 (€0.032) per unit for containers of brands that are part of an approved commingling agreement and a fee of USD\$0.04 (€0.037) per container for brands not participating in an approved commingling agreement.



Manual vs. automated collection

Because of its impact on overall system cost and effectiveness, one of the most important factors to consider when setting handling fees is the method by which containers are recovered; that is, whether they are collected manually or automatically.

In a modern **automated system**, consumers place their empty containers into an RVM, which counts and compacts the containers and provides the customer with a receipt (either electronic or paper), which they can then redeem at the checkout. The compacted containers are securely stored in bags until they are collected to be brought to the processing plant. Modern RVMs offer several additional services for consumers and include an online connection so that returns data can be transmitted to the CSA, which allows accounts to be reconciled more quickly.

In a **manual system**, customers return their empties to retail staff who reimburse the deposit and bring the containers to the store's dedicated storage space. Because the containers are not compacted, it is important that these are stored securely to prevent people from taking these containers and redeeming them again. These un-compacted containers, which take up more space in a collection vehicle, are then transported to a processing plant to be counted and compacted. Only then can accounts be reconciled and retailers reimbursed for the deposits they have paid out.

Aside from the costs associated with each collection method, there are also important benefits, particularly when it comes to RVMs. While these would not necessarily be included in calculations for determining handling fees, since they are not part of the costs of collecting and transporting used containers, it is worth identifying the further advantages and savings that can be derived from using RVMs, such as fraud prevention. For producers and distributors, one of the key benefits of modern RVMs is their ability to prevent or at least minimise fraud. Given that system revenues are used to fund the handling fee, fraud ultimately costs the drinks producers and distributors. A move towards a modern RVM system could greatly reduce the level of fraud and, consequently, the costs of the DRS.

A bottom-up approach

Handling fees should be calculated using a “bottom-up” approach, based on the costs incurred to retailers in relation to:

› Space:

based on the average rental cost per square metre, with assumptions made on the floor space taken up by take-back infrastructure (for RVM installation and for storage of collected containers)

› Labour:

based on average hourly wages, with assumptions made on the additional labour time required for taking back containers, processing receipts, and potentially cleaning RVMs and emptying bins when they are full

› RVM investment and maintenance/service costs:

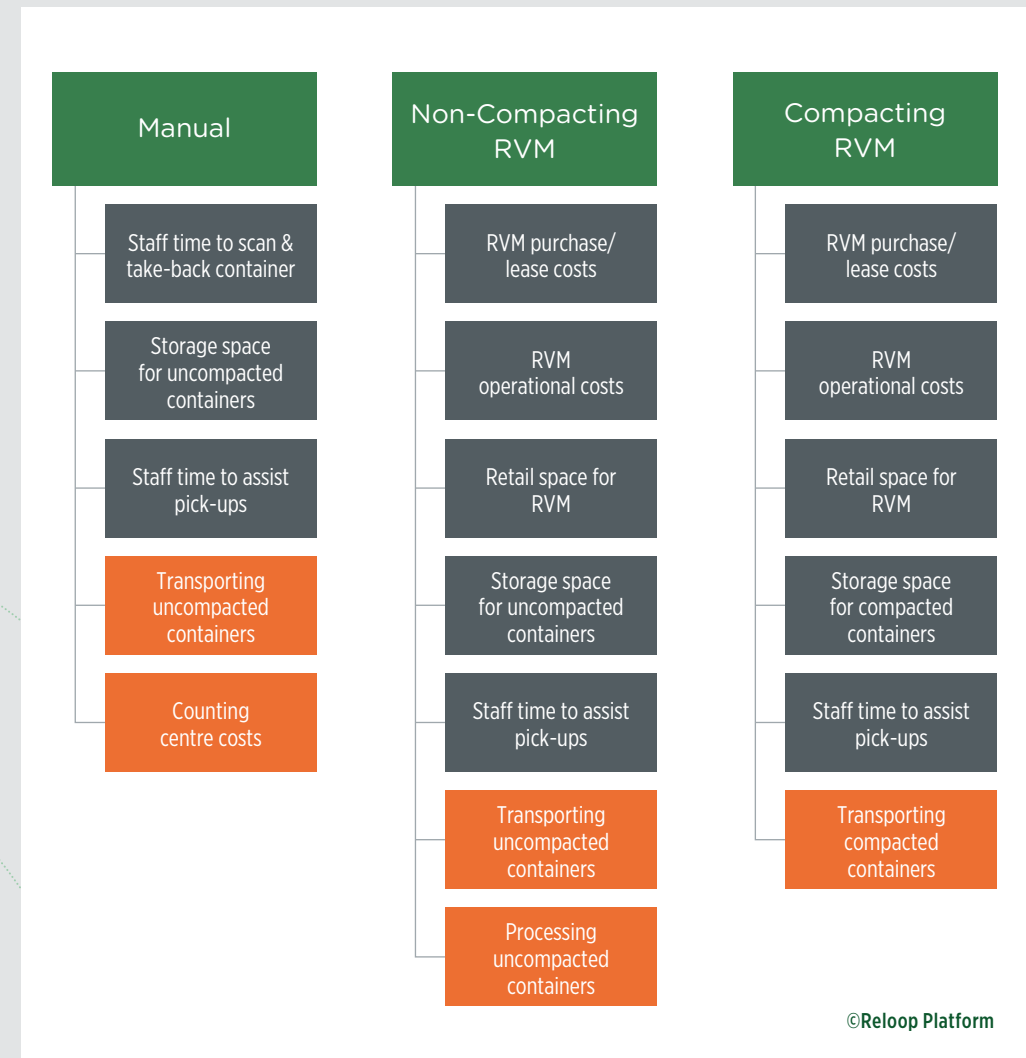
based on annualised costs associated with their purchase, installation, and ongoing servicing (in cases where retailers are provided RVMs free of charge by the system operator, the handling fee would be reduced)

› Cost of consumables:

Based on annualised costs related to the purchase of bins/bags, electricity, water usage, etc.

Figure 1 presents a summary of the factors to consider when calculating the handling fee in manual, non-compacting RVM, and compacting RVM scenarios. The grey boxes contain the costs to retailers that need to be covered by the handling fee. The orange boxes are wider system costs that are affected by a retailer’s manual or RVM choice. Manual redemption results in lower costs to retailers, but significantly higher system-wide costs. The opposite is true with an RVM-based system.

Figure 1
Calculating Handling Fees Based on Cost Coverageⁱⁱ



In most North American DRSs, handling fees are typically set at a flat rate or differentiated only between alcoholic and non-alcoholic beverages. In contrast, many European countries employ a differential handling fee structure based on the method of collection and the associated cost implications. In Finland and Estonia, for example, handling fees are determined based on cost recovery, ensuring that retailers receive fair compensation for their services.

With predictable handling fees, retailers can accurately forecast their income based on expected return volumes, allowing them to make informed decisions about investing in one or more RVMs. Conversely, a fixed-fee approach often fails to fully cover the costs incurred by retailers, especially those using RVMs.

Additionally, prescribing handling fees in legislation can politicise the issue, leading to lobbying from retailers for increased fees and opposition from producers who resist changes that would raise their costs.

The next section presents case studies illustrating examples of both good and bad practice when it comes to setting DRS handling fees.

Case studies

Finland

In Finland, handling fees are set by the system operator, Suomen Palautuspakkaus Oy (PALPA), a non-profit company jointly owned by retailers and drinks producers in a 50/50 split. As Table 1 shows, the handling fees that retailers receive vary based on the method of collection, whether manual or automatic (using RVMs). Retailers employing RVMs to collect empty containers receive a higher handling fee than those that employ manual collection. Additionally, retailers equipped with at least one RVM, no more than six years old, receive a fixed compensation fee for automated collections, totaling €99.04 (USD \$107.12), paid out twice per month. It is also worth noting that the handling fees vary by container type (plastic, metal, or glass) as these again carry different storage and transport-related costs.

Table 1
Handling Fees Paid to Retail Collection Points in Finland's Deposit Return System (2024)ⁱⁱⁱ

	Aluminium can	Plastic bottle	Glass bottle
Automated collection (RVM)	€0.0250 (USD\$0.027)	€0.0252 (USD\$0.027)	€0.0200 (USD\$0.022)
Manual collection	€0.0129 (USD\$0.014)	€0.0201 (USD\$0.022)	€0.0190 (USD\$0.021)

In 2023, Finland's deposit system achieved an overall collection rate of 97%, one of the highest in Europe. If we break it down by material, over 90% of PET bottles were collected, 98% of metal cans, and 99% of glass bottles. The majority (93%) of these containers were efficiently returned through RVMs, underscoring their significant value to consumers, retailers, and PALPA.

Case studies

Estonia

In Estonia, all retailers $\geq 200\text{m}^2$ (2,153 ft^2) are obliged to take back empty containers. To compensate them for this service, the system operator (Eesti Pandipakend OÜ) and retailer associations have agreed upon a formula to calculate the handling fee. The formula, which is reviewed annually to account for inflation, is intended to reflect all of the costs involved (including retailer space requirements and staff wages) to reach a figure that is both cost and revenue neutral. Like Finland, Estonia differentiates between RVM collections and a manual collection system; these differential fees are intended to reflect the transportation efficiencies generated by compacting the containers and the fact that compaction reduces the opportunity for fraudulent, multiple redemptions. In Estonia's case, the handling fee for retailers with an RVM with compaction is almost three times higher (for aluminium and plastic bottles) than retailers relying on manual returns (see Table 2). The difference between the two fees for glass bottles is even larger; for each glass bottle received, retailers with RVMs are paid €0.033 more per container than retailers who accept the bottles manually.

Table 2

Variable Handling Fees Paid to Retail Collection Points in Estonia's Deposit Return System (2024)^{iv}

	Aluminium can	Plastic bottle	Glass bottle
Manual collection	€0.0137 + VAT (USD\$0.015)	€0.0137 + VAT (USD\$0.015)	€0.0154 + VAT (USD\$0.017)
RVM with compaction	€0.0331 + VAT (USD\$0.036)	€0.0377 + VAT (USD\$0.041)	€0.0488 + VAT (USD\$0.053)
RVM without compaction			

In 2023, Estonia's overall return rate was 89%. Like in Finland, the majority (93%) of containers are returned via RVMs, once again demonstrating their value to consumers, retailers, and the system operator.

Case studies

Sweden

Unlike most other European DRSs, there is no legal obligation in Sweden for retailers to take-back containers; joining the DRS is voluntary. Despite this, as of 2023, there were 3,194 shops signed up to serve as collection points and take back containers. They understand the benefits of doing so, like increased foot traffic in their stores and the additional source of revenue that handling fees provide.

Like in most other European DRSs, handling fees in Sweden's DRS vary by both method of collection and container type, and are intended to cover the retailers' costs for handling the containers, including service of RVMs, customer service, work, facility, and materials. As such, retailers are offered a higher handling fee for containers returned via RVMs (the RVMs are purchased by and owned by the retailer). To further ensure that retailers are appropriately compensated, there is an additional distinction of how the returned containers are stored and collected, that is, whether they are picked up with a compact two-compartment truck (bulk pickup) or by a wholesaler/reseller (carton box/bag). In addition to a variable handling fee per can or bottle, Returpack pays stores with a compacting RVM a fixed annual fee of SEK 20,000. Both the fixed and variable fee are paid weekly.^v

Table 3

Variable Handling Fees Paid to Retail Collection Points in Sweden's Deposit Return System (2024)^{vi}

	PET bottle ≤ 1L	PET bottle > 1L	Metal can
RVM with compaction – pickup with compact truck (bulk)	0.294 SEK (€0.025, USD\$0.027) + 25% VAT	0.375 SEK (€0.032, USD\$0.035) + 25% VAT	0.184 SEK (€0.016, USD\$0.017) + 25% VAT
RVM with compaction – pickup by wholesaler / reseller (carton box/bag)	0.384 SEK (€0.033, USD\$0.036) + 25% VAT	0.611 SEK (€0.052, USD\$0.057) + 25% VAT	0.207 SEK (€0.018, USD\$0.019) + 25% VAT
Manual collection (bags)	0 SEK	0 SEK	0 SEK

Sweden's overall return rate in 2023 was 88.5%. As of the time of writing, 97% of the containers collected were returned through automated equipment, with the remaining 3% being handled manually.

Case studies

Latvia

Latvia's deposit return legislation requires that retailers $\geq 60\text{m}^2$ (646ft²) (in rural areas) and $\geq 300\text{m}^2$ (3,229ft²) (in cities including Daugavpils, Jēkabpils, Jelgava, Jūrmala, Liepāja, Rēzekne, Rīga, Valmiera, Ventspils, Ogre) are obliged to set up a return point to accept all types of deposit packaging at its point of sale, on its territory, or in the proximity of the sales point, not to exceed a distance of 150m from the point of sale. As of February 2024, there were over 1,400 collection points, including ~400 manual return points and over 1,000 RVMs (including 177 outdoor kiosks).

Table 4

Variable Handling Fees Paid to Retail Collection Points in Latvia's Deposit Return System (effective 1 March 2024)^{vii}

	Aluminium can	Plastic bottle	Glass bottle
Manual collection	€0.0227 (USD\$0.025)	€0.0238 (USD\$0.026)	€0.0406 (USD\$0.044)
RVM with compaction (depending on RVM model and capacity)	€0.0124 to €0.0137 (USD\$0.013 to USD\$0.015)	€0.0150 to €0.0156 (USD\$0.016 to USD\$0.017)	€0.0326 to €0.0361 (USD\$0.035 to USD\$0.039)
RVM without compaction	€0.0330 (USD\$0.036)	€0.0345 (USD\$0.037)	€0.0611 (USD\$0.066)

Case studies

Lithuania

In Lithuania, the system operator (Užstato Sistemų Administratorius [USAD]) pays retailers a handling fee to cover collection-related costs like space requirements, personnel related costs, utilities, etc. (see Table 5). Because retailers in Lithuania do not incur the capital cost of the RVM—since the RVM is paid for, installed and maintained by the DRS operator—the handling fees paid to those with RVMs do not cover the cost of the equipment. (In Lithuania, the investment in the RVM infrastructure was taken by the RVM supplier itself. The RVM supplier recuperates its investment via a “throughput” fee that the system operator (USAD) pays for each container collected through an RVM).^{viii}

Table 5

Handling Fees Paid to Retail Collection Points in Lithuania’s Deposit Return System (2024)^{ix}

	Plastic bottle	Metal can	Glass bottle
Manual collection or RVM without compaction	€0.0245 (USD\$0.026)	€0.0204 (USD\$0.022)	€0.0260 (USD\$0.028)
RVM with compaction	€0.0297 (USD\$0.032)	€0.0220 (USD\$0.024)	€0.0488 (USD\$0.053)

It’s worth noting that during the DRS implementation phase (2014 and 2015), Lithuanian retailers were successful in negotiating relatively high handling fees for the system’s launch in February 2016. In fact, the fees were higher than those paid to retailers in other DRS markets where RVMs were not provided free of charge, but where retailers had to make that investment. Due to the immense success of the scheme, handling fee costs were much higher than budgeted, which necessitated increased producer fees from industry. Together with the drinks industry, USAD (the DRS operator) attempted to negotiate with retailers to bring the handling fees down. This process was unsuccessful, and so a consultancy firm was hired to evaluate the real costs to retailers engaged in both manual and automated collection.

Based on its findings, the consultancy firm proposed average fees for manual and automated sites, differentiated by material. This meant that outperforming collection points would earn a little more money than they actually spent on collection and lower-performing collection points would receive a little less. This neutral approach to determining handling fees (using a third-party) was accepted by the retail sector and handling fees were adjusted down.

Case studies

Alberta, Canada

Alberta's collection infrastructure for drinks container returns is one of the largest in Canada. In 2023, there were 221 depots where Albertans could take back their empty drinks containers for a refund of their deposit. For every container that is returned to a depot, drinks manufacturers (through the Alberta Beverage Container Recycling Corporation [ABCRC] or a collection service provider) are required to pay the depot a handling fee.

Unlike most other Canadian schemes, Alberta's DRS has variable handling fees that vary by container type and size (see Table 6). Handling fees are set through a utility-like process that depends on depots reporting their costs annually to the Beverage Container Management Board (BCMB) using a standardised form. The information is collected by an independent third-party, which analyses and processes the information for purposes of setting handling fee rates.^x As per the BCMB's policies, its Board of Directors may, every three years, commence a Handling Commission Review to determine and set handling fees for the following three-year period.

Table 6

Variable Handling Fees Paid to Depot Operators in Alberta's Deposit Return System (effective May 1, 2024)^{xi}

Material	Handling Fee (CAD\$)
Aluminium 0-1L	\$0.03341 (€0.022, USD\$0.024)
Bag in Box > 1L	\$0.41155 (€0.27, USD\$0.30)
Bi Metal 0 - 1L	\$0.08418 (€0.056, USD\$0.061)
Bi Metal > 1L	\$0.18764 (€0.013, USD\$0.014)
Drink Pouch 0-1L	\$0.07130 (€0.048, USD\$0.051)
Gable Top 0-1L	\$0.07021 (€0.047, USD\$0.051)
Gable Top > 1L	\$0.13633 (€0.091, USD\$0.098)
Glass 0-1L	\$0.07903 (€0.053, USD\$0.057)
Glass > 1L	\$0.15975 (€0.11, USD\$0.12)
HDPE > 1L	\$0.16152 (€0.11, USD\$0.12)
Industry Standard Bottles (refillable)	\$0.06471 (€0.043, USD\$0.047)
Molson Coors MGD (refillable) 355ml	\$0.07106 (€0.047, USD\$0.051)
Moosehead Refillable	\$0.08792 (€0.059, USD\$0.063)
Other Plastics 0-1L	\$0.5189 (€0.35, USD\$0.37)
Other Plastics > 1L	\$0.05 (€0.033, USD\$0.036)
PET 0-1L (Clear & Light Blue Tint)	\$0.04505 (€0.030, USD\$0.033)
PET > 1L (Clear & Light Blue Tint)	\$0.13046 (€0.087, USD\$0.094)
Plastic Keg >1L (single-use)	\$2.32808 (€1.55, USD\$1.68)
Sleemans (refillable)	\$0.07285 (€0.049, USD\$0.053)
Steam Whistle (refillable)	\$0.08333 (€0.056, USD\$0.060)
Tetra Brik 0-1L	\$0.05236 (€0.035, USD\$0.038)
Tetra Brik > 1L	\$0.16671 (€0.11, USD\$0.12)

Connecticut, US

In 2023, Connecticut had the second lowest redemption rate (after Massachusetts) of all 10 US states with DRSs, recovering only 43.8% of all eligible drinks containers.^{xii} One of the main weaknesses of the current system is the return infrastructure and that returning containers is not as convenient as it should be. This, in turn, is related to the fact that Connecticut's handling fees (USD\$0.025 [€0.023] for each beer, hard cider, other malt container and \$0.035 [€0.032] for all other containers returned) are set in legislation, and therefore have no connection to the actual costs incurred by those accepting returns. As a result, redemption centres across the state have struggled to cover the daily overhead costs associated with handling, storage, and processing of single-use drinks containers, leading many of them to close their doors. Aside from preventing the system from adapting with inflation or consumer trends, the fact that Connecticut's handling fees are set in legislation means that amending the system is a lengthy legislative process, through which legislators are subject to political lobbying.

Michigan, US

In Michigan, while there is no handling fee per se, the state shares 25% of the unredeemed deposits it receives annually with retailers to help cover their handling costs (the amount they receive is based on the volume of containers they take back). Because the amount of unredeemed deposits goes down as the return rate goes up, the higher the return rate is, the less money there is available to give retailers to compensate them for their costs.

Summary of handling fees in existing deposit markets

Table 7 provides a summary of handling fees paid to retailers and redemption centres – and, in some cases, HORECA establishments – in existing deposit markets around the globe, where information was available.

Table 7
Latest Handling Fees in Deposit Return Systems for Single-Use Drinks Containers

	Handling Fee (per container)	Notes
Europe		
Croatia (2024)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> › RVM: 0.18 HRK (€0.023, USD\$0.025) › Manual: 0.05 HRK (€0.0066, USD\$0.071) 	25% VAT included
Denmark (2024)^{xiii}	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> › Manual: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> › Metal: 4.6 øre (€0.62, USD\$0.67) › Plastic < 1L (0.26 gal): 7.5 øre (€1.01, USD\$1.09) › Plastic > 1L (0.26 gal): 10.8 øre (€1.45, USD\$1.57) › Glass: 15.3 øre (€2.05, USD\$2.22) › RVM with compaction: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> › Metal: 2.7 to 3.7 øre (€0.36-0.50, USD\$0.39-0.54) › Plastic <1L (0.26 gal): 3.2 to 4.1 øre (€0.43-0.55, USD\$0.46-0.59) › Plastic >1L (0.26 gal): 3.5 to 5.6 øre (€0.47-0.75, USD\$0.51-0.81) › Glass: 4.0 to 7.9 øre (€0.54-1.06, USD\$0.58-1.15) › RVM with collection bags: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> › Metal: 4.6 øre (€0.62, USD\$0.67) › Plastic <1L (0.26 gal): 4.4 øre (€0.59, USD\$0.64) › Plastic >1L (0.26 gal): 9.4 øre (€1.26, USD\$1.36) › Glass: 5.2 øre (€0.70, USD\$0.75) 	

Table 7
 Latest Handling Fees in Deposit Return Systems for Single-Use Drinks Containers (continued)

	Handling Fee (per container)	Notes
Europe		
Estonia (2024)^{xiv}	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> › Manual: › Plastic and metal: €0.0137 + 25% VAT (USD\$0.015) › Glass: €0.0154 + 25% VAT (USD\$0.017) › RVM with compaction: › Plastic: €0.0377 + 25% VAT (USD\$0.041) › Metal: €0.0331 + 25% VAT (USD\$0.036) › RVM without compaction: › Glass: €0.0488 + 25% VAT (USD\$0.053) 	An additional fee of €0.0208/unit (USD\$0.022) is paid to collection points equipped with RVMs that receive an average of up to 27,000 units/month. This fee is paid as a lump sum once a year.
Finland (2024)^{xv}	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> › Manual (processing compensation): › Plastic: €0.0201 (USD\$0.022) › Metal: €0.0129 (USD\$0.014) › Glass: €0.0190 (USD\$0.021) › RVM (processing compensation + device compensation): › Plastic: €0.0252 (USD\$0.027) › Metal: €0.0250 (USD\$0.027) › Glass: €0.0200 (USD\$0.022) 	In addition to the per unit handling fees, retailers equipped with at least one RVM (that is no more than 6 years old) receive a fixed compensation fee for automated collections, which is paid out twice per month. The compensation amount stands at €99.04 (USD \$107.11).
Germany	› None	No handling fee, but retailers own and can sell the material to help cover costs
Hungary (2024)^{xvi}	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> › Manual: HUF 5 + VAT(€0.013, USD\$0.014) › RVM: HUF 7.5 + VAT (€0.019, USD\$0.021) 	
Iceland (2024)^{xvii}	› 3 ISK (€0.020, USD\$0.022)	
Latvia (2024)^{xviii}	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> › Manual: › PET: €0.0238 (USD\$0.026) › Metal: €0.0227 (USD\$0.025) › Glass: €0.0406 (USD\$0.044) › RVM with compaction (depending on RVM model and capacity): › Plastic: €0.0150 to €0.0156 (USD\$0.016-0.017) › Metal: €0.0124 to €0.0137 (USD\$0.013-0.015) › Glass: €0.0326 to €0.0361 (USD\$0.035-0.039) › RVM without compaction: › Plastic: €0.0345 (USD\$0.037) › Metal: €0.0330 (USD\$0.036) › Glass: €0.0611 (USD\$0.066) 	Excluding VAT

Table 7
Latest Handling Fees in Deposit Return Systems for Single-Use Drinks Containers (continued)

	Handling Fee (per container)	Notes
Europe		
Lithuania (2024)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> › Manual or RVM without compaction: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> › PET: €0.0245 (USD\$0.026) › Metal: €0.0204 (USD\$0.022) › Glass: €0.0260 (USD\$0.028) › RVM with compaction: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> › PET: €0.0297 (USD\$0.032) › Metal: €0.0220 (USD\$0.024) › Glass: €0.0488 (USD\$0.053) 	
Malta (2024)^{xix}	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> › Manual: €0.02 (USD\$0.022) › RVM: €0.0055 (USD\$0.059) <p>For RVMs installed at public hubs (not on retailers' premises), the system operator also pays the Government an encroachment fee.</p>	Excluding VAT

Table 7
 Latest Handling Fees in Deposit Return Systems for Single-Use Drinks Containers (continued)

	Handling Fee (per container)	Notes
Europe		
The Netherlands (2024)^{xx}	<p>Retail collection points:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> › Manual: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> › Plastic <1L: €0.0250 (USD\$0.027) › Plastic 1-3L: €0.0150 (USD\$0.016) › Metal: €0.0292 (USD\$0.032) › RVM without compaction: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> › Plastic <1L: €0.0295 (USD\$0.032) › Plastic 1-3L: €0.0211 (USD\$0.023) › Metal: €0.0114 (USD\$0.012) › RVM with compaction: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> › Plastic <1L: €0.0386 (USD\$0.042) › Plastic 1-3L: €0.0290 (USD\$0.031) › Metal: €0.0087 (USD\$0.0094) <p>Online delivery service: TBD</p> <p>HORECA collection points:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> › Manual: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> › Plastic <1L: €0.0222 (USD\$0.024) › Plastic 1-3L: €0.0122 (USD\$0.013) › Metal: €0.0219 (USD\$0.024) › RVM without compaction: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> › Plastic <1L: €0.0293 (USD\$0.032) › Plastic 1-3L: €0.0202 (USD\$0.022) › Metal: €0.0088 (USD\$0.0095) › RVM with compaction: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> › Plastic <1L: €0.0379 (USD\$0.041) › Plastic 1-3L: €0.0283 (USD\$0.031) › Metal: €0.0107 (USD\$0.012) 	
Norway (2024)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> › Manual or RVM without compaction: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> › Plastic: 0.10 NOK (€0.0084, USD\$0.0091) › Metal: 0.05 NOK (€0.0042, USD\$0.0046) › RVM with compaction: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> › Plastic: 0.247 NOK (€0.021, USD\$0.023) › Metal: 0.198 NOK (€0.017, USD\$0.018) 	

Table 7
Latest Handling Fees in Deposit Return Systems for Single-Use Drinks Containers (continued)

	Handling Fee (per container)	Notes
Europe		
Republic of Ireland (2024)^{xxi}	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> › Manual: €0.026 (USD\$0.028) › RVM: €0.022 (USD\$0.024) 	<p>In addition to the per unit handling fee, additional financial support is available to retailers opting for RVMs, subject to meeting specified criteria:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> › Year 1: €3,000 (USD\$3,244.53) (eligible if retailer processes <250,000 returns in Year 1) › Year 2: €2,000 (USD\$2,163.02) (eligible if retailer processes <250,000 returns in Year 2) › Year 3: €1,000 (USD\$1,081.51) (eligible if retailer processes <250,000 returns in Year 3) <p>Criteria for meeting financial support:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> › Proof of annual sales of 250,000 'in-scope' containers › Proof of annual returns <360,000 'in-scope' containers
Romania (2024)^{xxii}	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> › Manual: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> › Glass ≤ 500 ml: 0.1005 RON (€0.020, USD\$0.022) › Glass > 500ml: 0.1645 RON (€0.033, USD\$0.036) › Small plastic: 0.0596 RON (€0.012, USD\$0.013) › Big plastic: 0.0989 RON (€0.020, USD\$0.021) › Metal: 0.0482 RON (€0.0097, USD\$0.010) › RVM: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> › Glass ≤ 500 ml: 0.1820 RON (€0.037, USD\$0.040) › Glass > 500ml: 0.1889 RON (€0.038, USD\$0.041) › Small plastic: 0.1970 RON (€0.040, USD\$0.043) › Big plastic: 0.2486 RON (€0.050, USD\$0.054) › Metal: 0.1773 RON (€0.036, USD\$0.039) › HORECA <ul style="list-style-type: none"> › Glass ≤ 500 ml: 0.0544 RON (€0.011, USD\$0.012) › Glass > 500ml: 0.1089 RON (€0.022, USD\$0.024) › Small plastic: 0.0136 RON (€0.0027, USD\$0.0030) › Big plastic: 0.0432 RON (€0.0087, USD\$0.0094) › Metal: 0.0097 RON (€0.0019, USD\$0.0021) 	

Table 7
 Latest Handling Fees in Deposit Return Systems for Single-Use Drinks Containers (continued)

	Handling Fee (per container)	Notes
Europe		
Slovakia (2024)^{xxiii}	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> › Manual: €0.029 (USD\$0.031) › RVM: €0.0107 (USD\$0.012) to €0.0417 (USD\$0.045) depending on category of collection point (see Notes) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> › Excluding VAT › Collection points are categorised as A1, A2, A3, A4, A5, A6, B, or C, depending on the average monthly containers collected during the given period: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> › Category A1 (collection points that collected an average of $\geq 300,001$ units/month): €0.0107 (USD\$0.012) › Category A2 (collection points that collected an average of 250,001 to 300,000 units/month): €0.0118 (USD\$0.013) › Category A3 (collection points that collected an average of 200,001 to 250,000 units/month): €0.0124 (USD\$0.013) › Category A4 (collection points that collected an average of 150,001 to 200,000 units/month): €0.0140 (USD\$0.015) › Category A5 (collection points that collected an average of 100,001 to 150,000 units/month): €0.0172 (USD\$0.019) › Category A6 (collection points that collected an average of 50,001 to 100,000 units/month): €0.0213 (USD\$0.023) › Category B (collection points that collected an average of 25,001 to 50,000 units/month): €0.0259 (USD\$0.028) › Category C (collection points that collected an average of $\leq 25,000$ units/month): €0.0417 (USD\$0.045)
Sweden (2024)^{xxiv}	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> › Manual: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> › Metal: 0 SEK + 25% VAT › Plastic $\leq 1\text{L}$ (0.26 gal): 0 SEK + 25% VAT › Plastic $>1\text{L}$ (0.26 gal): 0 SEK + 25% VAT › RVM with compaction – pick-up with compact truck (bulk): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> › Metal: 0.184 SEK (€0.016, USD\$0.017) + 25% VAT › Plastic $\leq 1\text{L}$ (0.26 gal): 0.294 SEK (€0.025, USD\$0.027) + 25% VAT › Plastic $>1\text{L}$ (0.26 gal): 0.375 SEK (€0.032, USD\$0.035) + 25% VAT › RVM with compaction – pick-up by wholesaler/reseller: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> › Metal: 0.207 SEK (€0.018, USD\$0.019) + 25% VAT › Plastic $\leq 1\text{L}$ (0.26 gal): 0.384 SEK (€0.033, USD\$0.036) + 25% VAT › Plastic $>1\text{L}$ (0.26 gal): 0.611 SEK (€0.052, USD\$0.057) + 25% VAT 	<p>In addition to per unit handling fees, stores with a compacting RVM receive a fixed fee of 20,000 SEK/year (€1,717.53/year, USD\$1,857.63/year) (excluding VAT).</p>

Table 7
Latest Handling Fees in Deposit Return Systems for Single-Use Drinks Containers (continued)

	Handling Fee (per container)	Notes
United States of America		
California (effective 1 July 2024)^{xxv, xxvi}	USD\$0.0060 (€0.0055)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> › The handling fee is paid by the system operator to redemption centres in qualified “Convenience Zones.” › The system administrator also pays certified redemption centres and kerbside programme operators a “processing payment” for each pound of containers redeemed: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> › Aluminium: none › Glass: USD\$0.10623/lb (€0.098) › Plastic - PET: USD\$0.27601/lb (€0.26) › Plastic - HDPE: USD\$0.37850/lb (€0.35) › Plastic - LDPE: USD\$1.12624/lb (€1.04) › PP: USD\$0.99806/lb (€0.92) › Plastic - PS: USD\$0.62558/lb (€0.58) › Bi-metal: USD\$0.62618/lb (€0.58) › Other: USD\$0.68526/lb (€0.63) › Redemption centres and kerbside programmes get to keep revenue from material sales, which also help to cover their costs
Connecticut (2024)^{xxvii}	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> › Beer, hard cider, other malt containers: USD\$0.025 (€0.023) › Other beverages: USD\$0.035 (€0.032) 	

Table 7
Latest Handling Fees in Deposit Return Systems for Single-Use Drinks Containers (continued)

	Handling Fee (per container)	Notes
United States of America		
Hawaii (effective 1 October 2024 to 30 September 2025)^{xxviii}	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> › Plastic: USD\$0.044 (€0.041) › Aluminium/bimetal: USD\$0.034 (€0.031) › Glass: USD\$0.097 (€0.88) 	› Redemption centres also keep revenue from material sales to help cover their costs.
Iowa (2024)^{xxix}	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> › Containers returned to retailers and redemption centres: USD\$0.03 (€0.029) › Containers returned to dealer agents: USD\$0.01 (€0.0092) 	› The law defines a dealer agent as “a person who solicits or picks up empty beverage containers for the purpose of returning the empty beverage containers to a distributor or manufacturer.”
Maine (2024)^{xxx, xxxi}	› USD\$0.06 (€0.055)	
Massachusetts (2024)^{xxxii}	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> › Containers returned to retailers: USD\$0.0225 (€0.021) › Containers returned to redemption centres: USD\$0.0325 (€0.030) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> › Retailers receive free pick-up of containers by deposit initiators › Redemption centres must deliver redeemed containers to a central processing facility
Michigan^{xxxiii}	› None	› While there is no handling fee per se, large retailers receive 25% of unredeemed deposits (in proportion to the number of containers they redeem) to cover handling costs
New York (2024)^{xxxiv}	› USD\$0.035 (€0.032)	› By law, beverage distributors are required to pay each retailer or redemption centre a handling fee of not less than 20% of the refund value of each container returned to each retailer or redemption centre
Oregon^{xxxv}	› None	› Distributor EPR fees are not set in statute but help pay for any costs not covered by revenue from unredeemed deposits and material sales. Retailers $\geq 5,000\text{ft}^2$ (465m ²) within 3.5 miles (5.6km) of a redemption centre can voluntarily choose to pay a “participation fee” to the system operator (Oregon Beverage Recycling Cooperative [OBRC]) to help the organisation manage a nearby redemption centre in return for limiting or refusing redemption to consumers. The fee is designed to cover 50% of the cost of the nearby redemption centre with OBRC covering the remaining 50%.
Vermont (2024)^{xxxvi}	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> › Brand-sorted containers: USD\$0.04 (€0.037) › Containers that are part of a commingling agreement: USD\$0.035 (€0.032) 	

Table 7
Latest Handling Fees in Deposit Return Systems for Single-Use Drinks Containers (continued)

	Handling Fee (per container)	Notes
Canada		
Alberta (2024) ^{xxxvii}	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> › Aluminium ≤1L: CAD\$0.04107 (USD\$0.030) › Bag-in-box >1L: CAD\$0.49464 (USD\$0.36) › Bi-metal ≤1L: CAD\$0.10432 (USD\$0.075) › Bi-metal >1L: CAD\$0.21069 (USD\$0.15) › Specialty containers: CAD\$31.49 (USD\$22.74) › Drink pouch ≤1L: CAD\$0.0934 (USD\$0.067) › Gable top ≤1L: CAD\$0.08665 (USD\$0.063) › Gable top >1L: CAD\$0.16465(USD\$0.12) › Glass ≤1L: CAD\$0.09864 (USD\$0.071) › Glass >1L: CAD\$0.19647 (USD\$0.14) › HDPE >1L: CAD\$0.18966 (USD\$0.14) › PET (clear & light blue tint) ≤1L: CAD\$0.05463 (USD\$0.039) › PET (clear & light blue tint) >1L: CAD \$0.15667 (USD\$0.11) › Other plastics ≤1L: CAD\$0.6536 (USD\$0.47) › Other plastics >1L: CAD\$0.18121 (USD\$0.13) › Liquor & wine ceramics: CAD\$1.72633 (USD\$1.25) › Plastic single-use keg >1L: CAD\$2.3570 (USD\$1.70) › Small sleeve-in-a-box: CAD\$0.2296 (USD\$0.17) › Tetra Brik ≤1L: CAD\$0.06534 (USD\$0.047) › Tetra Brik >1L: CAD\$0.19139 (USD\$0.14) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> › Regulated by government and payable by a manufacturer or collection system agent to collection depots › In addition to the per unit handling fees, every depot (other than a Class D depot) is paid an additional fee of \$0.015 for each of the first 1.5 million containers shipped to the Collection Service Agent by that depot in every calendar year commencing July 1, 2022.
British Columbia ^{xxxviii}	› Not available (confidential)	› Depots contracted with Encorp that do not have a contract with Brewers Recycled Container Collection Council (BRCCC, the approved product stewardship agency for most alcohol aluminium cans in British Columbia) may independently accept BRCCC containers as a convenience to their customers and may discount the deposit paid to consumers to compensate for collection costs
Newfoundland and Labrador (2024) ^{xxxix}	› CAD\$0.0465 (€0.031, USD\$0.034)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> › Paid to depot operators and participating kerbside programmes › An additional handling fee of CAD\$0.002/unit is paid to depots offering Xpress drop-off service › The handling fee on refillable beer is charged at the back-end from the refund.
New Brunswick (2024) ^{xl}	› CAD\$0.05383 (€0.036, USD\$0.039)	› The system operator refers to the handling fee as a “service fee”

Table 7
Latest Handling Fees in Deposit Return Systems for Single-Use Drinks Containers (continued)

	Handling Fee (per container)	Notes
Canada		
Northwest Territories (2024)^{xli}	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> › Aluminium: CAD\$0.030-\$0.040 (USD\$0.022-\$0.029) › Plastic ≤1L: CAD\$0.035-\$0.045 (USD\$0.025-\$0.032) › Plastic >1L: CAD\$0.040-\$0.050 (USD\$0.029-\$0.036) › Glass: CAD\$0.040-\$0.050 (USD\$0.029-\$0.036) › Tetra/Gable top/Drink pouch: CAD\$0.040-\$0.050 (USD\$0.029-\$0.036) › Bi-metal: CAD\$0.040-\$0.050 (USD\$0.029-\$0.036) › Bag-in-box: CAD\$0.040-\$0.050 (USD\$0.029-\$0.036) 	› The lower handling fee shown for each material applies specifically to the Yellowknife depot, while the higher handling fee pertains to all other depots within the territory.
Nova Scotia (2024)^{xlii}	› CAD\$0.0485 (€0.032, USD\$0.035)	
Ontario (2024)^{xliii}	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> › The Beer Store (TBS) locations: The Liquor Control Board of Ontario (LCBO) is obliged to reimburse TBS for all deposit refunds that TBS pays out to consumers who return wine, spirit, and imported beer containers that were purchased at LCBO stores and that are not sold at TBS. LCBO is also required to pay TBS a per unit service fee for these containers; the level of this fee is determined in contract and is unavailable. › Grocery stores (as of October 31, 2024): CAD\$0.02 (USD\$0.014) 	› The Government of Ontario concluded the Early Implementation Agreement with The Beer Store on March 28, 2024. This agreement continues the existing deposit system for alcohol containers and creates a new obligation for beverage alcohol retailers that are more than 4,000 ft ² (372m ²) to collect empty alcohol containers (convenience stores are exempt). This requirement comes into effect October 31, 2024. A grocery store is exempt from these requirements until January 2026 if it is located within 5km (3.1 miles) of The Beer Store (as of September 3, 2024). Participating retailers will receive a handling fee of CAD\$0.02 per container provided that the required sorting is complete.
Prince Edward Island (2024)^{xliiv}	› CAD\$0.04916 (€0.033, USD\$0.036)	
Quebec (2024)	› TBD	› Under the old legislation, a CAD\$0.02 (USD\$0.014, €0.013) handling fee was paid to return point operators. The value of the handling fees in the new system (in place since 1 November 2023) are unknown as of the time of writing. However, the fees will vary by type of return point (e.g. retailers vs. redemption centres) and also by material type. There is a transitional fee of CAD\$0.0225/container. As of March 2024, the system operator is doing a study to calculate the handling fees for the new system. Once they are determined, return point operators will receive handling fees retroactive to 1 November 2023.

Table 7
Latest Handling Fees in Deposit Return Systems for Single-Use Drinks Containers (continued)

	Handling Fee (per container)	Notes
Canada		
Saskatchewan	› None	› Instead of handling fees, depots receive a contracted rate per year, which is generated through the Environmental Handling Charge (EHC).
Yukon (2024)^{xiv}	› Aluminium: CAD\$0.025 (USD\$0.018) › Beer/cider: CAD\$0.025 (USD\$0.018) › Milk <750ml (0.2 gal): CAD\$0.040 (USD\$0.029) › Milk ≥750ml (0.2 gal): CAD\$0.075 (USD\$0.054) › Plastic and glass <750ml (0.2 gal): CAD\$0.040 (USD\$0.029) › Plastic and glass ≥750ml (0.2 gal): CAD\$0.075 (USD\$0.054)	

Table 7
Latest Handling Fees in Deposit Return Systems for Single-Use Drinks Containers (continued)

	Handling Fee (per container)	Notes
Australia		
Northern Territory (2024)^{xlvi}	› -AUD\$0.08-\$0.09 (€0.048-€0.054, USD\$0.052-\$0.059) (estimated)	› Handling fees are negotiated and confidential. Depots may be compensated for “reasonable costs” related to handling the containers by the DRS coordinator to whom they deliver the container.
Australian Capital Territory (2024)^{xlvii}	› AUD\$0.08-\$0.09 (€0.048-€0.054, USD\$0.052-\$0.059) (estimated)	› For every container returned through the collection infrastructure, the Network Operator receives a fee to cover the costs for the collection points, the logistics, counting centres and administration, as well as adding a certain margin. The value of this fee has not been made public.
New South Wales (2024)^{xlviii}	› AUD\$0.08-\$0.09 (€0.048-€0.054, USD\$0.052-\$0.059) (estimated)	› For every container returned through the collection infrastructure, the Network Operator receives a fee to cover the costs for the collection points, the logistics, counting centres and administration, as well as adding a certain margin.
South Australia (2024)^{xlix}	› Not available	› Negotiated between producers and super collectors (confidential)
Western Australia (2024)ⁱ	› AUD\$0.08-\$0.09 (€0.048-€0.054, USD\$0.052-\$0.059) (estimated)	
Queensland (2024)ⁱⁱ	› AUD\$0.08-\$0.09 (€0.048-€0.054, USD\$0.052-\$0.059) (estimated)	› The handling fee paid to depots is around AUD\$0.06. The scheme coordinator then pays additional fees to logistics companies, which, when combined amounts to around AUD\$0.08-\$0.09.
Victoria (2024)ⁱⁱⁱ	› Not available	
Middle East		
Israel (2024)ⁱⁱⁱⁱ	› None	
Central America & the Caribbean		
Barbados	› None	› No handling fee per se, but 20% of the redemption value is paid to dealers or redemption centres
Belize	› Unknown	

Table 7
Latest Handling Fees in Deposit Return Systems for Single-Use Drinks Containers (continued)

	Handling Fee (per container)	Notes
Federated States of Micronesia		
Kosrae (2024)^{liv}	› None	› There is technically no handling fee, however USD\$0.02/container (the non-refundable portion of the deposit) is retained by the system operator for operating costs
Pohnpei (2024)^{lv}	› None	› There is technically no handling fee, however USD\$0.01/container (the non-refundable portion of the deposit) is retained by the system operator for operating costs
Yap (2024)^{lvi}	› None	› There is technically no handling fee, however USD\$0.01/container (the non-refundable portion of the deposit) is retained by the system operator for operating costs
Oceania – Other		
Republic of Kiribati (2024)^{lvii}	› None	› There is technically no handling fee, however USD\$0.01/container (the non-refundable portion of the deposit) is retained by the system operator for operating costs
Republic of the Marshall Islands (2024)^{lviii}	› None	› There is technically no handling fee, however USD\$0.01/container (the non-refundable portion of the deposit) is retained by the system operator for operating costs
Republic of Palau (2024)^{lix}	› None	› There is technically no handling fee, however USD\$0.025/container (the non-refundable portion of the deposit) goes to redemption centres to help cover their costs
Tuvalu (2024)	› None	› There is technically no handling fee, however USD\$0.05/container (the non-refundable portion of the deposit) goes to redemption centres to help cover their costs
ASIA		
Republic of Korea (Sejong City and Jeju Island) (2024)	› None	

Note: Currency conversion accurate as of 30 July 2024 retrieved from <https://www.xe.com>

Endnotes

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- ^{ix} Personal communication with Gintaras Varnas, USAD, 5 March 2024.
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- ^{xiv} Personal communication with Kaupo Karba, Eesti Pandipakend OÜ, 7 March 2024.
- ^{xv} Personal communication with Tommi Vihavainen, PALPA, 8 March 2024.
- ^{xvi} MOHU. <https://repoint.hu/hu/visszavaltasi-pontok>
- ^{xvii} Personal communication with Helgi Lárússon, Managing Director, Endurvinnslan, 26 February 2024 and 6 March 2024.
- ^{xviii} Depozita Iepakojuoma Operators. <https://www.depozitapunkts.lv/business-for-sellers-en>
- ^{xix} Personal communication with Matthew Dimech, CEO, BCMS Malta, 13 March 2024.
- ^{xx} Statiegeld Nederland. January 2024. “Beleid: Inname-punten.” Available at: <https://www.statiegeldnederland.nl/wp-content/uploads/Beleid-innamepunten-2024.pdf>
- ^{xxi} Re-turn. 16 January 2023. “Ireland’s New Deposit Return Scheme: Update.” Available at: <https://re-turn.ie/wp-content/uploads/2023/07/Retailer-Handling-Fees-Update-July-2023.pdf>
- ^{xxii} Personal communication with Julia Leferman, Director of the Brewers of Romania Association.
- ^{xxiii} Personal communication with Borbála Agócsová, Správca zálohového systému, 2 April 2024
- ^{xxiv} Returnpack. 28 December 2023. “Handling fee 2024.” Available at: <https://assets.rp-pm-prod.pantamera.nu/48e2a6/globalassets/documents/handling-fee-2024.pdf>
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