

**SDR
PORTUGAL**



HORECA ESTABLISHMENT - FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

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Introduction

The purpose of this document is to clarify the main questions related to the contribution and participation of the HORECA sector (Hotels, Restaurants and Cafés) in the Deposit and Return System (DRS). It brings together practical and relevant information on processes and best practices, promoting clear and efficient communication and strengthening the alignment between SDR Portugal and professionals in the sector.

About the Deposit and Return System

1. What is the Deposit and Return System, and how does it work?

The DRS is a system for collecting non-reusable beverage containers, such as plastic bottles and metal cans, for recycling. Products covered by the DRS, which are identified by a specific symbol, are subject to deposit value. The amount paid by the consumer or HORECA establishment is refunded when the empty packaging is returned, with the aim of recycling it to produce new beverage packaging.

2. Why is there a deposit value?

The deposit value exists to encourage the return of non-reusable beverage containers (plastic bottles and cans), thus ensuring that the DRS meets its ambitious targets (90% collection by 2029). Paying this deposit at the time of purchase creates an incentive to return the packaging to a collection point, contributing to the success of the system.

3. What is the deposit value amount?

The deposit value was set by the Government at €0.10 (ten cents), applicable to all packaging covered.

4. When is the DRS implemented?

The Deposit and Return System will be implemented from 10 April 2026.

5. What is the role of HORECA establishments in the implementation of the DRS?

The DRS aims to collect as much packaging as possible, with ambitious targets (90% collection rate by 2029). The HORECA sector represents a network of approximately 80,000 establishments nationwide, which account for around 48% of packaging consumed. This channel is therefore key to the successful implementation of the system, ensuring the correct daily collection and return of packaging.

6. DRS and SDR Portugal. What are the differences?

The DRS is the Deposit and Return System that will increase the recycling of plastic bottles and beverage cans up to three litres, ensuring high-quality raw materials that can be reintroduced into the beverage market (a bottle becomes a bottle again, a can becomes a can again).

SDR Portugal, holder of a government licence, is the management entity responsible for ensuring the implementation and management of the Deposit and Return System in mainland Portugal and in the Autonomous Regions of Madeira and the Azores.

I am responsible for a HORECA establishment. What should I do?

7. I am responsible for a HORECA establishment. What are my obligations under the DRS?

As the person responsible for a HORECA establishment or similar, you must take into account:

- a) the obligation to charge the deposit value associated with the products, covered by the DRS that it sells, and to ensure that this is itemised on invoices, where payment is made prior to consumption;
- b) the obligation to return the deposit value paid by customers for the products sold by the establishment, upon delivery of the packaging in the proper condition and presentation of the respective proof of purchase, when requested;
- c) the obligation to store beverage containers purchased and consumed at your establishment;
- d) the obligation to update price lists and menus, ensuring that the deposit value is presented separately from the product price in all materials;
- e) The obligation to adapt invoicing and sales software systems so that cash flow can be monitored and the volume of packaging returns verified.

8. What procedure should I follow for the collection of packaging?

The first step is to check the packaging. That is, whether it is completely empty, intact and undamaged, whether the lid is in place (where applicable), and whether the barcode and SDR Portugal symbol are fully legible. In addition to a visual inspection, the person in charge of the HORECA establishment can use the APP provided by SDR Portugal on a smartphone to confirm the barcode recognition and the correspondence to the product and type of packaging.

Then, you must store the packaging carefully so that it does not get damaged and return it to an SDR Portugal collection point or kiosk at your convenience. It may also be possible to collect them directly from the establishment, in which case establishments interested in adhering to the DRS must submit a registration request to SDR Portugal. If accepted, they must then register on the SDR Portugal Portal, accessible through the area dedicated to the HORECA Establishment at *SDRPortugal.pt*.

After the return, the deposit value corresponding to the number of packages delivered will be refunded.

9. What packaging should I receive at my establishment?

HORECA establishments are only obliged to collect packaging from drinks purchased and consumed on their premises, but may voluntarily accept other packaging.

10. Where can I return empty packaging?

There are three ways to return empty packaging for HORECA establishments:

- a) Return to a collection point: these operate in supermarkets and hypermarkets.

- b) Return to SDR Portugal kiosks: collection points equipped with machines that can receive large quantities of packaging at once. They are located in urban areas with more HORECA establishments, with adapted opening hours and easy access.
- c) Collection conducted directly at the HORECA establishment: option available only for establishments registered as SDR Portugal adherent and with a respective agreement signed with SDR Portugal.

11. Is it necessary to purchase any equipment to accept returned packaging?

The collection of packaging from HORECA establishments does not require any equipment. Only the correct storage of packaging must be ensured for subsequent return to collection points or SDR Portugal kiosks

Establishments interested in adhering the DRS for direct collection from their premises must submit a registration request to SDR Portugal. In this case, the packaging must be placed in 240 litre bags which, once full, must be sealed with tamper-proof seals (security seals) provided by SDR Portugal. Orders for these consumables can be placed quickly and digitally, with instructions and format to be made available shortly.

If there is a wish to recognise the packaging using the APP provided by SDR Portugal, simply install the application on a conventional smartphone.

12. Do I have to deliver the packaging to the collection machines myself, or can they come and collect it from my premises?

Collection at the premises only applies to adhering establishments for direct collection by SDR Portugal, supported by a specific contract that will define the minimum quantities and the procedure for placing collection requests. Alternatively, the establishment should use SDR Portugal's collection points or kiosks in its vicinity, using its own means and without being subject to restrictions on frequency or minimum quantities for collection.

13. Should I charge the deposit amount to the consumer?

There are two possible situations:

- a) When payment is made before consumption (prepayment, takeaway, self-service or home delivery), the deposit value for the beverage containers purchased must be charged to the consumer. In these cases, the container usually remains in the consumer's possession, and it is their responsibility to return it. However, if the consumer so wishes, the deposit value paid must be returned upon delivery of the packaging in the proper condition and presentation of the respective proof of purchase, when requested;
- b) When payment is made after consumption, the deposit value of the packaging should not be charged to the consumer, unless they remain in possession of the packaging or the label or packaging is damaged, preventing its identification. Usually, in these situations, the packaging remains at the HORECA establishment after consumption, and it is the establishment's responsibility to return it.

14. Must I indicate the deposit value on the purchase receipt for the customer?

Yes, the deposit value is set by law and must be itemised on receipts, invoices and all price supports.

15. Is it mandatory to change menus and price lists?

Yes. All price lists (labels, posters, menus, etc.) must explicitly state that the deposit value is added to the sale price of the item. The sale price of the product and the deposit amount are different amounts, so the deposit value cannot be included in the price of the products covered.

Packaging accepted by DRS

16. What packaging is accepted by DRS?

DRS accepts single-use beverage containers of up to 3 litres in plastic bottles or metal cans sold on the domestic market. All DRS packaging must bear the SDR Portugal symbol so that they can be easily identified.



17. I still have old stock in the warehouse (pre-DRS packaging that is not accepted by SDR Portugal). What should I do?

A transition period has been defined after the DRS comes into operation, during which DRS packaging and 'pre-DRS' packaging may coexist on the market.

The DRS will come into operation on April 10th 2026, and the transition period will last for 120 (one hundred and twenty) days, ending on August 9th 2026. After this period, the purchase or sale of beverages in pre-DRS packaging will no longer be permitted, meaning that retail establishments and the HORECA sector will only be able to sell DRS packaging, under penalty of committing an offence in the event of an inspection by the authorities.

18. What is the most effective way to manage existing stock so that both packages are not on sale at the same time?

What is the most effective way to manage existing stock so that both packages are not on sale at the same time.

19. During the transition period, how do I distinguish between packaging that can and cannot be returned to collection points?

Only packaging bearing the SDR Portugal symbol can be returned. If in doubt, you can also use the APP provided by SDR Portugal to check whether the products in question are registered and approved by DRS.

20. Where are the packages sent after they are returned?

The packaging is sent to counting and sorting centres, with recycling being its final destination. The aim is for each bottle or can, to become a new bottle or can, in a circular system.

Registration and adhesion of HORECA establishments for direct collection

21. Hotels, restaurants, and cafés are required to register on the SDR Portugal platform?

If the establishment does not wish to adhere to the DRS, opting instead to manage the return of the beverage containers it has sold and returning them, under the conditions and at the frequency it decides, through the network of collection points or kiosks available nearby, it does not have to register on the SDR Portugal Portal.

However, if the establishment wishes to adhere to the direct collection service provided by SDR Portugal for the packaging it is required to collect, i.e. the packaging of beverages sold by the establishment itself, it must register and establish a specific contract that will define the minimum quantities and the procedure for making collection requests, subject to approval by SDR Portugal.

22. I want to join the SDR Portugal, i.e. have direct collection by SDR Portugal. Where should I register?

The application must be submitted via the SDR Portugal Portal. The application will be analysed on a case-by-case basis by SDR Portugal in terms of its viability and for the purposes of the agreement to be established with SDR Portugal. This registration must be made at least 30 days before the expected start date.

23. In the case of a HORECA establishment adhering to direct collection, how does SDR Portugal know that I already have full bags ready for collection by a carrier?

Once the bags are full and sealed, the HORECA establishment must register them on the dedicated APP provided by SDR Portugal, using a smartphone. Simply scan the barcode on the tamper-proof seal of each full bag and the system will automatically associate it with the HORECA establishment in question. Alternatively, you can enter the barcode number manually. Subsequent collection by a carrier contracted by SDR Portugal can take place via reverse or dedicated logistics.

24. Does the APP count the packages when I put them in the bag?

No. The APP is used to scan the barcode on the security seal of each full bag, and the system automatically associates it with the HORECA establishment in question. Only once the bags have been collected from the HORECA establishment will they be counted at a specific centre managed by SDR Portugal.

25. What is the difference between reverse logistics and dedicated logistics?

Reverse logistics occurs whenever returns are processed through a carrier/distributor who visits the establishment regularly. When a beverage order is delivered, sealed bags containing DRS packaging are collected at the same time.

Dedicated logistics occurs when a carrier is hired to travel specifically to the location to collect the bags of packaging.

Reverse logistics should be prioritised whenever possible.

26. How are full bags collected in dedicated logistics?

The bags are collected by a carrier contracted by SDR Portugal. Collection is scheduled whenever there is a minimum quantity of four (4) full bags, closed and correctly read and registered in the APP. For quantities of less than four (4) bags, collection can be made, with a cost charged by SDR Portugal to the HORECA establishment.

27. When will I receive the deposit value?

Once the packaging has been collected from the HORECA establishment, it is counted at a specific centre managed by SDR Portugal. The units counted are invoiced by the HORECA establishment to SDR Portugal, on a self-billing basis. If there are no discrepancies, the invoice is issued monthly, by the 5th working day of the following month, for all packaging collected, counted and recorded during the previous month. Deposit payments are made within a maximum of 30 (thirty) days from the date of the respective invoice, by bank transfer to the registered IBAN of the HORECA establishment.

28. I do not wish to remain an adherent of SDR Portugal. What should I do?

You must notify SDR Portugal of this intention by email 15 (fifteen) days in advance, except in accidental or unforeseen circumstances, which must be communicated as soon as possible. The notification must be sent to recolha@sdrportugal.pt.

29. My business will be temporarily suspended. What should I do?

You must notify SDR Portugal of the situation by email 15 (fifteen) days in advance, except in the case of accidental or unforeseen circumstances, which must be reported as soon as possible. The notification must be sent to recolha@sdrportugal.pt.

30. What procedures are in place to resolve discrepancies between manual counts, digital records, and invoiced amounts?

The procedure for these situations will be based on identifying the cause of the discrepancy (e.g. packaging that is not part of the DRS, damaged packaging that cannot be read during counting, packaging with different weights, among others). If necessary, SDR Portugal will provide all explanations so that the discrepancies are well understood and accepted by both parties.

Management of packaging's collection and return

31. What precautions should I take when storing packaging?

Packaging must be stored in a safe and clean place, in 240 litre bags, in the case of manual collection, and with tamper-proof seals (security closures) provided by SDR Portugal. Orders for these consumables can be placed quickly and digitally, with instructions and format to be made available shortly. The tamper-proof seals have a unique barcode, which when scanned will link the bag to the HORECA establishment where it is used.

The bags must be filled to the level indicated on them and then sealed with the tamper-proof seals to prevent loss or theft of packaging. No more than two full 240 litre bags should be stacked to prevent tearing or crushing.

32. Am I responsible for packages that do not meet the requirements for acceptance in the DRS?

Packaging that is rejected because it is damaged, or packaging that does not bear the SDR Portugal symbol, does not entitle the customer to a refund of the deposit value and must therefore be taken to the yellow recycling bins, with the deposit value being considered lost.

These packages will be rejected during automatic counting, both in the case of attempted delivery to SDR Portugal collection points or kiosks, and in the case of placement in bags for direct collection, which are then sent for counting.

33. My establishment is located in a shopping centre. Will there be collection machines or will I be responsible for collecting the packaging?

Shopping centres are large areas where there is usually a retailer with a supermarket or hypermarket. In most cases, this will be an DRS collection point. In food courts, there may be solutions such as automatic machines for the consumer, if the company managing the shopping centre so decides. There may be other different solutions, assessed on a case-by-case basis.

34. What costs will I incur in managing the entire process?

Collection from HORECA establishments does not entail additional costs associated with the process of DRS, as it is equivalent to the current operation for complying with the obligation to selectively collect the same packaging and deliver it to recycling bins. In cases where the HORECA establishment is an adherent to SDR Portugal, if the collection of full bags is not carried out using reverse logistics, and the establishment wishes to have up to three full bags collected using dedicated logistics, this may incur a cost to be borne by the operator of the HORECA establishment.

35. I have a large volume of packaging. What is the best way to return it to SDR Portugal?

SDR Portugal kiosks are the most suitable option for this situation, as they allow a large number of packages to be returned at once (instead of delivering them one by one in a RVM). These kiosks will be located in urban areas with more HORECA establishments, with adapted opening hours and easy access.

36. What solutions are available for establishments that do not have physical space available for packaging collection, but which have high sales volumes and are located in high-traffic areas (e.g. airports, football stadiums, among others)?

There is no obligation, exception regime, or specific solution for these locations. Everything will depend on the amount of packaging covered that each of these locations will produce in a given period of time and the collection points located in their vicinity. Contacting the SDR Portugal team will facilitate the assessment of the best and most efficient solution for each case.

37. Do plastic bottles and metal cans have to be stored separately?

No. You just need to ensure that they are stored correctly so that the packaging is not damaged.

38. How should I manage packaging left on tables after consumption?

You must check the condition and compliance of the packaging and store it carefully so that you can later deliver it to SDR Portugal collection points or kiosks and receive the respective deposit value. If they are damaged, it will not be possible to recover the deposit value, so you must deliver them to the nearest yellow recycling bin.

39. How should I proceed with beverage packaging that is consumed in the establishment's kitchen?

Once empty, the packaging must be stored and subsequently delivered to SDR Portugal collection points or kiosks, so that the respective deposit value can be returned.

40. Are there any exceptions for collecting packaging from schools or sports facilities?

There is no obligation, exception regime, or specific solution for these locations. Everything will depend on the amount of packaging covered that each of these locations will produce in a given period of time and the collection points located in their vicinity. Contacting the SDR Portugal team will facilitate the assessment of the best and most efficient solution for each case.

41. Are there any solutions planned for collecting packaging at large events?

SDR Portugal will evaluate options for collecting packaging covered by the DRS at large events. Everything will depend on the amount of packaging covered that each of these locations will produce in a given period of time and the collection points located in their vicinity. Contacting the SDR Portugal team will facilitate the evaluation of the best and most efficient solution for each case.

Orders and invoicing

42. How does the payment of the deposit value upon purchase to the supplier work?

The HORECA establishment pays the deposit value to the supplier at the time of purchase of beverages covered by the DRS. This amount is VAT-exempt and is itemised on the supplier's invoice, separate from the cost of the product.

43. How do I receive the deposit value that I will pay to the supplier in advance when purchasing the drinks?

This amount is returned when the packaging is returned to SDR Portugal collection points or kiosks. At collection points with automatic machines, it is expected that the return can be made in the form of a voucher to be redeemed at the commercial establishment itself, a voluntary donation, a bank transfer, or a voucher to be exchanged for cash. At SDR Portugal kiosks, the return will be made via bank transfer, or you can make a donation.

In the case of establishments adherent to SDR Portugal, where packaging is collected through reverse or dedicated logistics, the deposit value to be returned to the respective establishment will be calculated based on the counting centre process.

44. I placed an order with the supplier and received some damaged packages, which I fear will not be accepted by the DRS. Can I return them?

You should contact your supplier as soon as possible, explaining the context and occurrence, in order to directly resolve whatever is necessary.

45. How is the deposit value billed when I purchase beverages at Cash&Carry establishments?

In the same way as it is invoiced in any other commercial establishment, whether a supermarket or a HORECA establishment. The deposit value must be clearly stated on the invoice.

46. Is the deposit value subject to VAT?

The deposit value is not subject to VAT.

47. What is the correct terminology to use on invoices and menus?

You must use the designation 'Valor de Depósito' or "Depósito". Terms such as 'fee' or other similar terms must not be used.

48. Is there a deadline for customers to request a return, and can I refuse a return if it is after the deadline?

The legislation states that the validity period for vouchers issued cannot be less than 12 (twelve) months, so you cannot refuse to return the deposit value if a voucher or proof of purchase shows a date within this period.

49. If the customer wants a return of the deposit in the same format used to pay for the purchase (e.g. bank card or meal card), am I obliged to provide this option, or can I choose to return in cash or through the loyalty scheme?

The return of the deposit value may be processed using a different method than the one used for payment, bearing in mind that the aim is to offer as many methods as possible for this purpose, including cash in the case of points with automatic collection at food retailers (typically hypermarkets or supermarkets).

50. Does the deposit apply to drinks included in menus?

The deposit applies to all single-use beverage containers up to 3 litres in plastic bottles and metal cans identified with the SDR Portugal symbol, including promotions, samples, and donations.

51. Will the selling price of drinks increase?

No. The sale price of the product and the deposit value are different. The deposit value, charged at the time of purchase, is a security deposit that is returned when the packaging is returned, and the sale price of the product remains unchanged.

52. Do the containers that are served at the table have a deposit value and should this be charged to the customer?

All single-use beverage containers, up to three litres, in plastic bottles and metal cans, have an associated deposit value. In this situation, assuming that the beverage is served at the table and consumed on the premises, the deposit value should not be charged to the customer. This value should only be charged if the customer damages the label or packaging or keeps it in their possession.

53. Are beverages available in vending machines covered by the DRS? If so, how does the deposit value apply and how is it presented to the consumer?

Yes, it applies to all covered packaging that is available for consumption in a commercial activity. The deposit value will be added to the price of the product and must be itemised on the respective price labels and proof of purchase.

54. Does the deposit value apply to drinks that are taken home, in a takeaway or home delivery situation?

Yes, since payment occurs before consumption, and the customer retains possession of the packaging.

55. Does the deposit value apply to drinks that are in refrigerators in a self-service system?

Yes, it applies to all covered packaging that is available for consumption in a commercial establishment.

56. What audit and financial reconciliation mechanisms are in place to ensure the accuracy of the returns of the deposit value?

SDR Portugal will have an IT system that allows all packaging to be tracked throughout its logistics chain, which will be the basis for the planned audits and respective reconciliations, where applicable.

Consumer

57. Is the consumer obliged to return the packaging to my establishment?

No. Consumers can return packaging to the various collection points in the DRS network or to SDR Portugal kiosks, available in mainland Portugal and the Autonomous Regions.

However, if the consumer has purchased a drink at the HORECA establishment and wishes to return the empty container to the same location, the establishment must accept it, provided that the label and packaging are not damaged, and must immediately return the deposit value. The establishment may require proof of purchase.

58. The consumer consumed the drink outside the establishment and came back to return the packaging and receive the deposit value. How should I proceed?

If the drink was purchased at the establishment in question, the packaging must be accepted and the deposit returned. Otherwise, the establishment is not obliged to accept the return and may refer the consumer to a nearby SDR Portugal collection point or kiosk.

59. The consumer consumed the drinks at my establishment. How should I deliver or return these containers?

In this case, it is the HORECA establishment that must ensure the preliminary storage of these packages. These can then be delivered to a collection point, SDR Portugal kiosks, or through direct collection at the establishment, if the establishment is an adherent to SDR Portugal.

60. If the consumer leaves the packaging at the establishment, can I return it and receive the deposit return?

Yes, this is the procedure that must be followed so that the establishment can recover the deposit amount it paid to its supplier.

61. How do I explain the deposit value to the consumer?

Consumers should understand that the deposit value is set by law and applies to all single-use beverage packaging, up to three litres, in plastic bottles and metal cans. This value is a deposit that is paid at the time of purchase but will be returned when the same empty packaging is returned to a collection point, an SDR Portugal kiosk or the establishment where the purchase was made.

62. Is there any communication or support material that will be made available to use at the point of sale?

Yes. Some communication materials are being developed to help clarify how the DRS works and which can be used at points of sale.

The communication materials that will be available to the HORECA sector are a tool that supports the necessary explanation.

63. Where can I refer consumers who do not know where to return their packaging?

You can direct consumers to collection points in supermarkets and hypermarkets, or to SDR Portugal kiosks located in various urban areas. Soon, the official SDR Portugal brand website will provide the locations of all collection points in Portugal.