



# MassDEP

Commonwealth of Massachusetts  
Department of Environmental Protection

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## **COVID-19 & Redemption of Beverage Containers**

On March 18, 2020, MassDEP and the Attorney General's Office [suspended enforcement of beverage container redemption requirements for retailers](#). MassDEP and the Attorney General's Office will resume enforcement of beverage container redemption requirements in two phases:

1. Enforcement of redemption requirements will resume at retailers using reverse vending machines (RVMs) on **June 5, 2020**.
2. Enforcement of redemption requirements will resume at retailers accepting containers over the counter on **June 19, 2020**.

In consideration of the health and safety needs of all stakeholders including the public, beverage retailers, beverage distributors, third-party agents, and workers throughout the redemption chain, redemption services are directed to adhere to protocols [in accordance with Governor Baker's order](#), and [Executive Office of Housing and Economic Development's Guidance Regarding the Operation of Essential Services](#)

These requirements can be implemented with additional measures specific to redemption services, for example:

### **Customer**

- Customers shall be required to wear a mask or cloth face covering while inside the bottle room [in accordance with Governor Baker's order](#).
- Post conspicuous signage to remind customers to practice social distancing.
- Clearly mark 6' spacing in lines on the floor and provide ways to maintain 6' spacing outside the store.

- Limit bottle room occupancy so that customers and employees can maintain 6' of separation.
- Designate a specific time for high-risk and elderly persons to use redemption services.
- In larger bottle rooms, when possible, RVMs may be relocated to accommodate social distancing. In smaller spaces, the number of available RVMs may be limited (disable every other machine) or dividers may be installed.

## **Employee**

- Require retail and third-party service provider employees to wear gloves and masks while interacting with customers, handling beverage containers, and/or servicing RVMs.
- Disinfect RVMs before proceeding to empty.

## **Additional Tips**

Customers are encouraged to check the operating status of redemption locations before bringing empty beverage containers for redemption. Customers must ensure any beverage containers are free of product, rinsed and not commingled with other materials. Redemption locations may not accept containers with contaminants.

## **Redemption Centers**

Customers with large volumes of containers (120 or more) are encouraged to utilize a redemption center with the capacity to manage large volumes efficiently and effectively. A list of registered redemption centers can be found at:

<https://www.mass.gov/service-details/find-a-bottle-can-redemption-center>

Customers are encouraged to call in advance to check hours of operation.

*MassDEP and the Attorney General's Office commend the front line retail associates who have continued to work throughout the pandemic, performing essential services, including recycling.*