



Issued Spring 2024

© Brewers Retail  
Inc. 2024

# Empty Return Guide

Sorting and handling TBS and ODRP deposit containers



# Table of Contents

<b>Introduction</b>	1
Frequently Asked Questions	2
<b>The Beer Store System Containers</b>	6
TBS Containers	7
Pallet Construction	8
Setting Up Can Bins	12
Refillable Containers - Industry Standard Bottle	13
Refillable Containers - Proprietary Bottles	14
Non-Alcoholic Beer Containers	16
<b>Ontario Deposit Return Program Containers</b>	18
Sorting & Shipping	19
Preparing Cardboard Bins for Glass Containers	20
Preparing Plastic Bottles (PET), Tetra Paks, & Bag-in-a-Box Containers for Shipping	21
Pallet Construction	22
Ceramic & Porcelain Containers	23
<b>Secondary Packaging</b>	24

# Introduction

Welcome to The Beer Store's Empty Return Guide - intended to provide you with details and illustrations that will help all of us achieve better sorting, handling and shipping results! Before we get started on the details within the guide, let's focus on some shared accomplishments:

- You are part of a return system consisting of over **1,000** physical sites across Ontario that accept back containers for deposit refund and associated packaging for recycling;
- Your efforts supported a system that handles combined returns of around **1.7 billion containers each year**. That includes bottles, cans, tetra paks, and bag-in-box containers.
- That container volume, combined with associated packaging also accepted back for recycling, resulted in over **200,000 tonnes of material diverted from landfill** each year.
- Return sites like yours helped customers of the beer system achieve an average annual return rate of 80% - that means **8 out of 10 beer containers sold in Ontario are returned** for deposit refund at sites like yours - amazing!
- **Around 240 million bottles are refilled** by brewers each year as a result of your efforts. That refilling avoids over 20,000 metric tonnes of CO<sub>2</sub> from being emitted into the atmosphere and requires over 400,000 Gigajoules less energy than what would have been used for new one way glass.

Those are all big accomplishments! By working to maintain or improve sorting and handling standards, we can make every container count towards higher end recycling. This guide will assist you along the way and provide tools for you to educate your customers around what they can bring back for deposit refund and how they might organize their returns to help the process.

Please keep this guide handy so that your team can refer to it on a regular basis. If you have any questions that this guide doesn't cover, please reach out to:

Call Centre 1-888-948-2337  
or  
Stewardship@bdl.ca

# Frequently Asked Questions

## Who sells packaged beer (bottles and cans) in Ontario?

The Beer Store, LCBO (including authorized grocery and LCBO convenience locations), Retail Partners, and on-premise local brewers locations can all sell beer. All beer is sold under a beverage alcohol deposit system, with the deposits refunded upon empty container return to an authorized site.

## What are the two alcohol deposit systems in Ontario?

The deposit system at The Beer Store applies to all products sold within The Beer Store - even de-alcoholized beer. Product that is sold both in The Beer Store and in other authorized sales channels like the LCBO is called common product, with deposits applied under rules of The Beer Store's deposit system. All packaged alcohol, including beer, sold exclusively outside The Beer Store's system is subject to the Ontario Deposit Return Program.

## Who should be charged a deposit on beer purchases?

All customers who purchase packaged alcohol beverages in Ontario should be charged a deposit - bars, restaurants, home consumers, permit holders, retail stores (not applicable to table service at a bar or restaurant).

## What is the deposit on packaged beer sold in Ontario?

The deposit is set up on a per-container basis on all packaged beer sold in Ontario. For ease of administration, deposit levels for packaged product in The Beer Store system are aligned with the posted deposit rates for ODRP:

Container Size / Type	Deposit per container
Glass and plastic bottles over 100ml and up to 630ml	\$0.10
Glass and plastic bottles over 630ml	\$0.20
Metal cans over 100ml and up to 1L	\$0.10
Metal cans over 1L	\$0.20

# Frequently Asked Questions

## Who collects the deposit from customers on beer sold in Ontario?

All sites selling packaged beer to be consumed elsewhere (that is, not table service) should charge a deposit to the customer purchasing the beer. The Beer Store, LCBO, grocery retail stores and all on-premise brewery stores should charge a deposit on packaged beer sales in Ontario.

## Who refunds the deposit on beer sold in Ontario?

Substantially all Beer Store locations (retail stores and distribution centres and cross-dock locations) will refund the deposit on beer sold in Ontario, based on the posted deposit rates in the TBS and ODRP systems. As mentioned, since The Beer Store charges a deposit on non-alcoholic beer sold in our stores, we also will refund a deposit on the brands we sell. In addition, The Beer Store's other authorized sites will also refund TBS and ODRP deposits – empty dealers, Retail Partners, Agency stores will all refund the full posted deposit on alcohol sold in Ontario.

## Who sets the ODRP deposit levels?

The Liquor Control Act/Ontario Regulation 13/07 (part of the Liquor Control Act) sets the deposit levels for the Ontario Deposit Return Program (ODRP). In 2007, The Beer Store adjusted their deposit levels on packaged product (bottles and cans) to match the ODRP deposits.

## What associated packaging is accepted back for recycling?

Associated packaging includes items such as: corrugate cases, boxboard cases, 6-or-8 pack carriers, can trays, 6-pack rings, bottle caps. Customers using one-use plastic bags from other retailers should be encouraged to next time use a re-usable bag or a beer box to transport empty containers back for refund. For the time being we will accept the plastic bag as a customer service gesture.

# Frequently Asked Questions

## What items qualify for deposit refund?

All beverage alcohol product sold in Ontario should have a deposit charged upon sale to a customer and is eligible for deposit refund upon return. Both alcoholic and non-alcoholic beer sold in the TBS system has a TBS deposit on it, and beer sold only outside the TBS system has an ODRP deposit on it.

Not all beer deposit refunds should be processed as TBS refunds. Beer sold exclusively outside The Beer Store system is charged, and then refunded an ODRP deposit in the same way as wine and spirit containers.

**\*PLEASE NOTE\*** Cans without lids/tops on them were never sold to customers as beverage alcohol, therefore they are NOT eligible for deposit refund when returned.

Crushed cans are eligible for deposit refund if they are visually identifiable as alcohol beverage cans.



# Frequently Asked Questions

## What is done with the containers once the deposit is refunded?

Beer containers registered in The Beer Store as refillable are sorted and made available to brewers for washing and refilling. Many brewers share in the benefits of both the industry standard bottle and of private proprietary refillable bottles.

Non-refillable glass containers are sorted into clear and coloured streams and sent for recycling into new bottles, fiber glass insulation and other glass products.

Cans are processed (steel cans are separated from aluminum cans), densified/baled, and sent for recycling into new can stock in the case of aluminum, and steel products in the case of steel.

To help prepare the containers for shipping, customers should separate cans from bottles, and return sites should separate refillable containers from non-refillable containers, and then within the non-refillable container stream, sort clear glass separately from all other colours.

**\*PLEASE NOTE\*** Ceramic containers must be separated from glass containers and returned separate from all other containers in a box marked "CERAMIC". This is important as ceramic can contaminate the glass stream.

Some ceramic examples below and more provided on page 23:



# **The Beer Store System Containers**



# **TBS Containers - Bottles**

## **Sorting:**

- Industry standard bottles (ISBs) can be placed together in the same cases and on the same pallets, regardless of brewer, brand or label.
- Refillable containers in private mold bottles (PMB) must be sorted by brewer and not mixed with non-refillable containers. Some PMBs require further sorting by brand and brewer.
- Non-refillable TBS bottles are to be separated and cased by clear and other.

## **Casing:**

- Both non-refillable and refillable private mold bottles must be cased and ready for return at the time of pick up.
- Only beer cartons and/or industry knock-down cartons are to be used for the return of empty TBS system bottles.
- Remove all caps before casing (caps can be returned in clear bags or boxes).
- Refillable bottles must be placed in the upright position.
- All cases are to be inspected to ensure they are full.
- Ditch and damaged bottles may be returned but are to be separated from good bottles.

## **Piling techniques & pallet stability requirements:**

- When palletizing full cases of empty beer bottles, use the guides on the following pages for proper placement. The row piling pattern must be alternated as depicted in each table to ensure stability.
- Only Brewers Standard Pallets must be utilized for the return of empties.
- The mixing of \$0.10 containers and \$0.20 containers in cases on the same row is not permitted, with the exception of the top row of a return pallet.

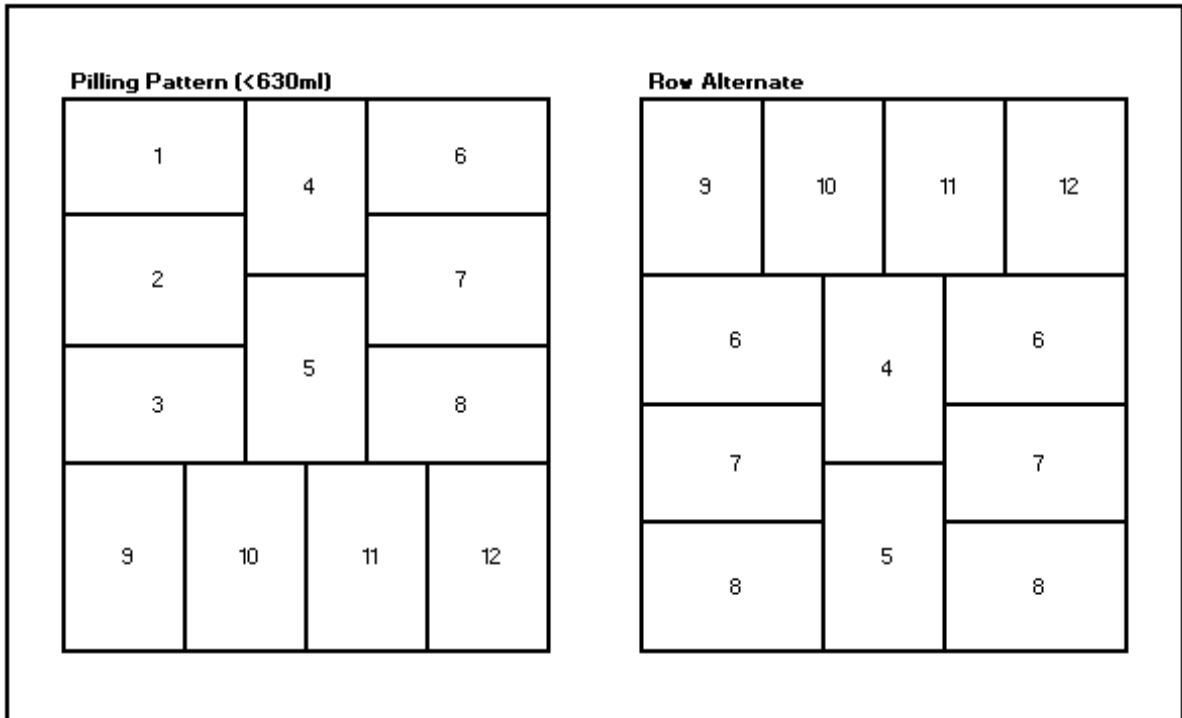
# **TBS Containers - Cans**

- TBS cans and ODRP cans do not need to be separated.
- Cans must be sorted by their deposit level (less than or equal to 1 L, over 1 L).
- Cans can either be returned in a clear plastic bag, or when necessary, in an empty can container (PECC) provided by your DC.
- Only loose cans are to be put in PECCs. If cans are returned in plastic bags, open the bag, empty the cans only into the PECC, then place the empty plastic bag into a separate clear bag to be returned for recycling.
- The bags/containers must be tagged with the deposit value and quantity clearly identified. When using PECCs, a “check-off sheet” should be used to denote the number of units in the container.

# TBS Containers - Pallet Construction

When palletizing full cases of 10-cent glass TBS bottles, use the guide below for proper placement.

Table L-1: Cases of containers < 630 ml



- A maximum of 12 cases (24 bottles per case) can be placed on each row.
- Two 12-pack brewery cartons can be used in place of one 24-pack case. 12-pack cartons are not to be placed in trays, nor are they to be placed in trays with 6 packs, nor are they to be placed in a 24 pack brewery carton with 12 loose bottles.
- 6 packs (in brewery cases) can be placed in trays to create a full case. Do not mix 6 pack cases and loose bottles or place 6 pack cartons in a 24 pack brewery carton.
- Only place fully enclosed industry 24-pack containers on the 4 corners of each row (i.e. no knock-downs, 12-packs, or 6-packs in trays).
- To palletize other industry case sizes, use Table L-2 on the following page for proper placement. Always alternate the patterns (as demonstrated above in Table L-1) to ensure stability. Please note, 28 packs can be placed 10 per tier and 7 high.
- Palletized empty bottles < 630 ml must either be tied with twine on the 4<sup>th</sup> and top row or the entire pallet must be shrink wrapped.

# TBS Containers - Pallet Construction

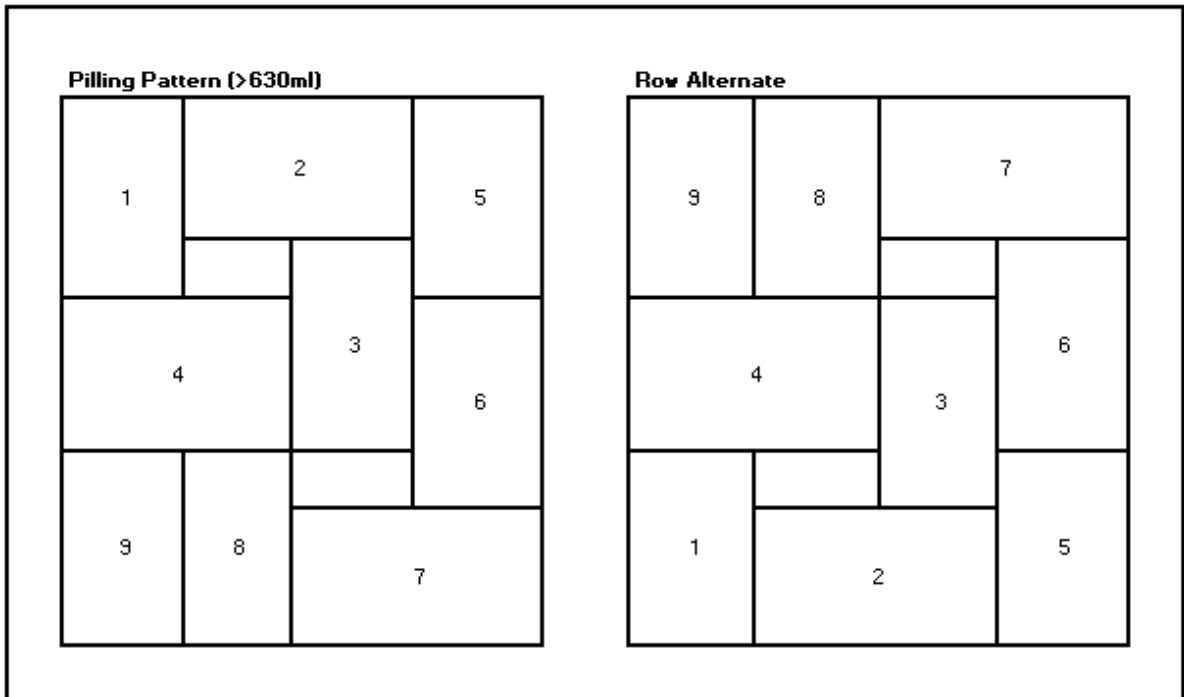
Table L-2: Cases of containers < 630 ml

24	24	24	24	28	28	28	24
24	24	24	24	12	12	12	24
24	24	24	24	24	24	24	24
24	24	24	24	24	24	24	24
28	28	28	28	24	24	24	24
28	28	28	28	15	6	15	24
28	28	28	28	28	28	28	24
28	28	28	28	28	28	28	24
18	18	18	18	24	24	24	24
18	18	18	18	24	24	24	24
18	18	18	18	20	28	24	24
12	12	12	12	24	24	24	24
20	20	20	24	15	15	15	15
20	20	20	24	6	6	6	6
20	20	20	24	12	12	12	24
24	24	24	24	24	24	24	24
15	15	15	15	18	18	18	18
15	15	15	15	24	24	24	24
15	15	15	15	24	24	24	24
24	24	24	24	24	24	24	24

# TBS Containers - Pallet Construction

To palletize full 12-pack cases of large TBS bottles (i.e. bottles greater than 630 ml), use the guide below for proper placement. Palletize 8-pack cases of large bottles on the top rows of return pallets.

Table L-3: Cases of containers  $\geq$  630 ml



- A maximum of 9 cases (12 bottles per case) must be placed on each row.
- Two 6-pack cartons can be used in place of one 12-pack case.
- Palletized empty bottles  $>$  630 ml must either be tied on every row or the entire pallet must be shrink wrapped.
- When piling cartons with various heights on a single row, attention must be taken in order to ensure pallet stability when additional rows are added. When possible, place these cartons on top pallet rows to ensure stability.

# TBS Containers - Pallet Construction

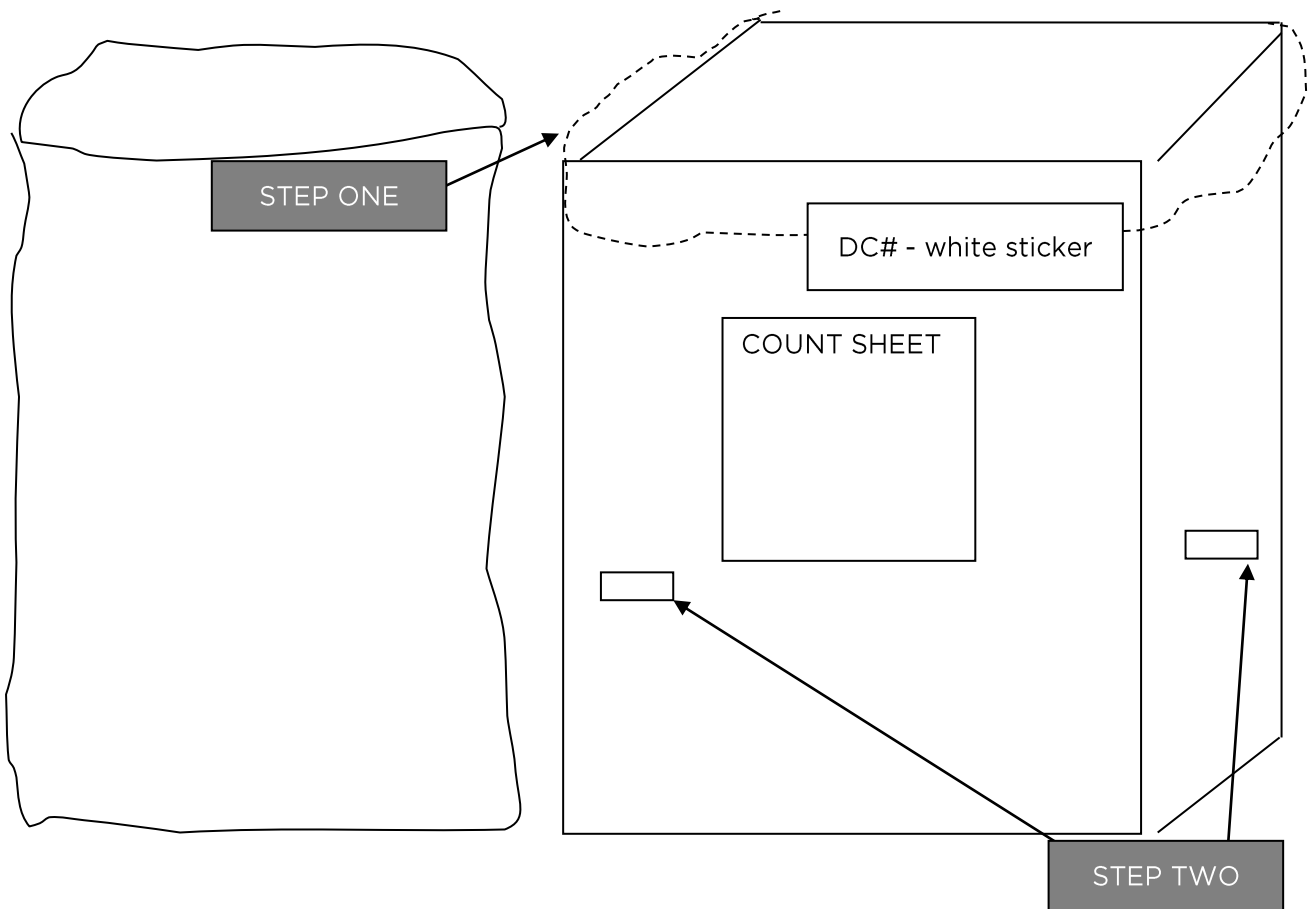
The chart below lists maximum pallet heights by various row combinations. Pallets of returns must not exceed the heights listed below.

Table L-4: Pallet Building Combinations

Possible Pallet Scenarios	Rows per Pallet		Pallet Height (inches)
	Less than or equal to 630ml	Greater than 630ml	
S1	7	0	68.75
S2	6	1	72.50
S3	5	2	76.25
S4	3	3	70.75
S5	2	4	74.50
S6	0	5	69.00

# Setting Up Can Bins

The following diagram demonstrates how to prepare a plastic empty can container (PECC) or a cardboard bin (gaylord) for collection of empty aluminum cans.



**Step one:** Insert plastic liner inside bin. Place a TBS sticker to the outside of the container on plastic liner (please do not stick label directly on to bin). Write your customer # on the sticker.

**Step two:** Remove or "X" out any stickers/labels that have been placed from previous shipments.

Fill bin with cans only. 10-cent aluminum count sheets can be provided by your supplying DC. Check off quantity of cans inside the bin by the dozen. Note that a PECC bin should not exceed 260 dozen cans. Attach the count sheet to the outside of the bin. Write the DC # on the count sheet along with your customer #.

# Refillable Container - Industry Standard Bottle

The industry standard bottle (ISB) is a 341 ml amber/brown long neck bottle with a twist off top that is shared by multiple brewers. ISBs can be cased and palletized together regardless of brand/brewer.

Below are samples of brands sold in the ISB.



## Examples of ISBs:

Blue De-Alcoholized



Budweiser Zero  
(de-alcoholized)



Molson Ultra



O'Doul's Lager & Amber



Our Compliments



Other Examples

- 50 Ale
- Budweiser
- Bud Light
- Canadian
- Coors Light
- Coors Original
- Cool
- Creamore
- Export
- Miller Lite
- Old Style Pilsner
- Upper Canada

# Proprietary Refillable Containers by Brewer

## Labatt – 341 mL

---

Brava



Brava Light



Bud Light Lime



Corona



Corona Sunbrew



Mill Street Organic Lager



**NOTE:** Corona Extra, Corona Sunbrew, and Mill Street Organic must be sorted into separate cases for each brand. Work with your DC representative to determine an appropriate palletization and return setup.

## Molson – 355 mL

---

Miller Genuine Draft





# Proprietary Refillable Containers by Brewer

## Moosehead - 341 mL

Cracked Canoe



Moosehead Lager



## Sleeman - 341 mL

Clear 2.0



Cream Ale



Original Draught



Honey Brown Lager



## Steam Whistle - 341 mL

Pale Pilsner



## Large Bottles

Coors Light (710 mL)



Images Not Available

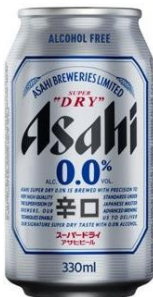
- 50 Ale (710 mL)
- Bud Light (710 mL)
- Budweiser (710 mL)
- Canadian (710 mL)
- Export (710 mL)

# Non - Alcoholic Beer

All non-alcoholic beer containers sold at The Beer Store, including those not sold in the ISB, are eligible for deposit refund. See below for images of non-alcoholic beer containers sold within the TBS system.

## Cans

Asahi 0.0 - 355 mL



Budweiser Zero - 355 & 473 mL



Bockale IPA, Lager - 355 mL



Collective Arts Hazy Pale Ale - 355 mL



Coors Edge - 473 mL



Corona Sunbrew 0.0 - 355 mL



Heineken 0.0 - 330 mL



Molson Exel - 355 mL



Muskoka Veer - 355 mL



Perth Brewery Play Lager - 473 mL



# Non - Alcoholic Beer

Partake Blonde, IPA, Pale - 355 mL



Peroni 0.0 - 330 mL



Sober Carpenter Blonde, IPA, White, Red - 473 mL



## Bottles

Becks Non-Alcoholic 0.0 - 330 mL



Clausthaler Original - 330 mL



Corona Sunbrew 0.0 - 330 mL



Erdinger Alkoholfrei - 330 mL & 500 mL



Heineken 0.0 - 330 mL



Peroni 0.0 - 330 mL



Stiegl Freibier - 500 mL



# **Ontario Deposit Return Program (ODRP) Containers**

# Sorting & Shipping

ODRP containers come in a variety of colours, sizes, and shapes. The products need to be sorted into separate bins based on container type, and in the case of glass, by colour.

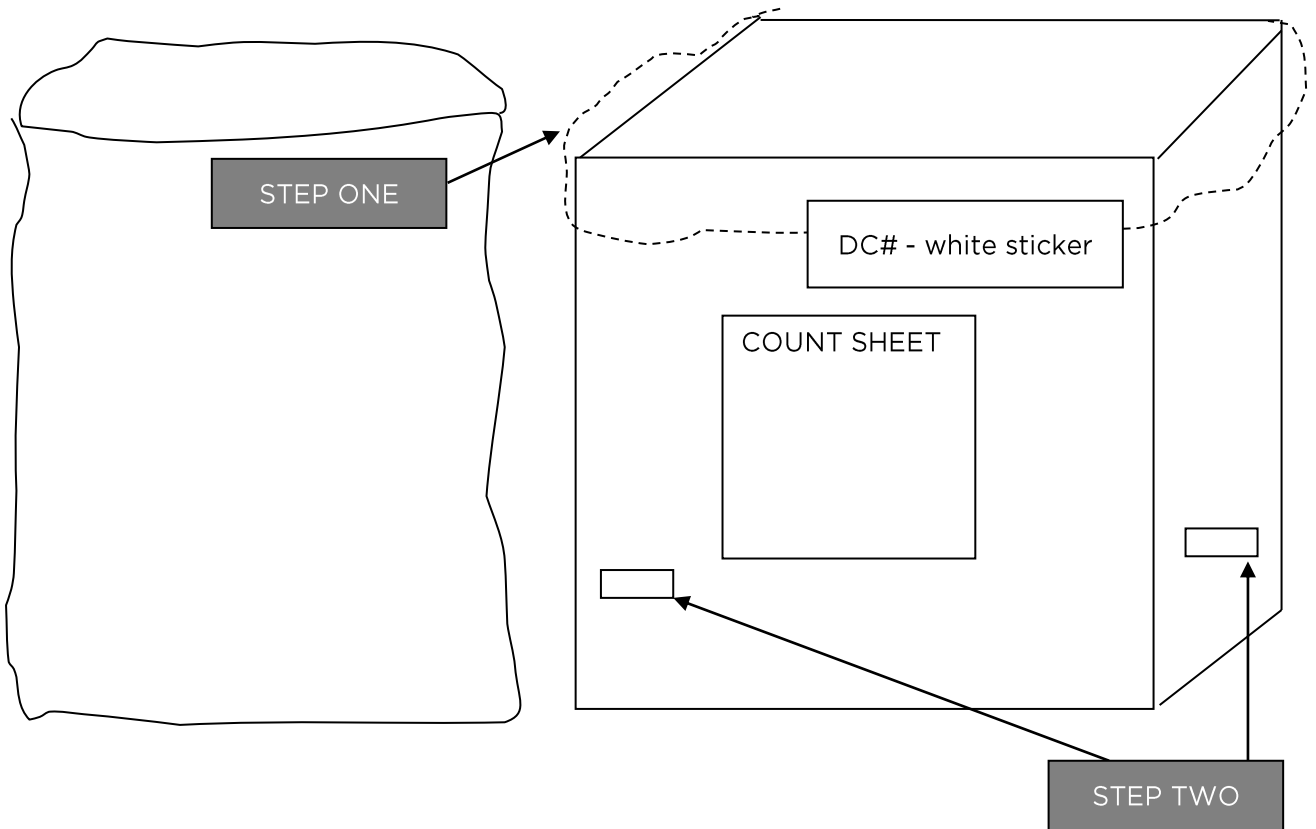
## Sorting:

- Clear and other/colour glass must be sorted separately.
  - Clear glass containers have an un-tinted base and neck. Bottles can be plastic wrapped. Georgia Green (rum bottles) are considered clear containers.
  - Coloured glass refers to all coloured, tinted, or near-opaque glass. If you are unsure if a bottle is clear or other/colour, put it in the other/colour bin. Coloured glass CANNOT include ceramic.
- Bottles less than 100 ml can be included in the bins, but are of zero value. Do not mark down on count sheet.
- **Ceramic containers MUST be sorted and shipped separately from glass containers.**
- Caps and corks do not need to be removed from ODRP containers.
- Plastic bottles (PET), tetra paks, and bag-in-box containers are to be sorted separately.
- ODRP aluminum cans do not have to be separated from TBS aluminum cans.

## Shipping:

- All bins, bags, and boxes used for shipping must have:
  - A sticker with your customer number written on it
  - A count sheet detailing the number of containers in the bin/bag/box, broken down by deposit category (10 or 20-cents)
- Ceramic containers must be shipped in a box separate from glass containers, properly labelled “CERAMIC”
- Plastic bottles (PET), Tetra paks, and bag-in-box containers are to be placed in clear plastic bags.
- Glass containers are either to be shipped:
  - In a bin provided by your supplying DC.
  - In original purchased cartons or in a supplied knock-down carton. If enough cartons are filled to palletize the glass, follow the steps on page \*\* for proper pallet construction.

# Preparing cardboard bins (gaylords) for ODR glass containers

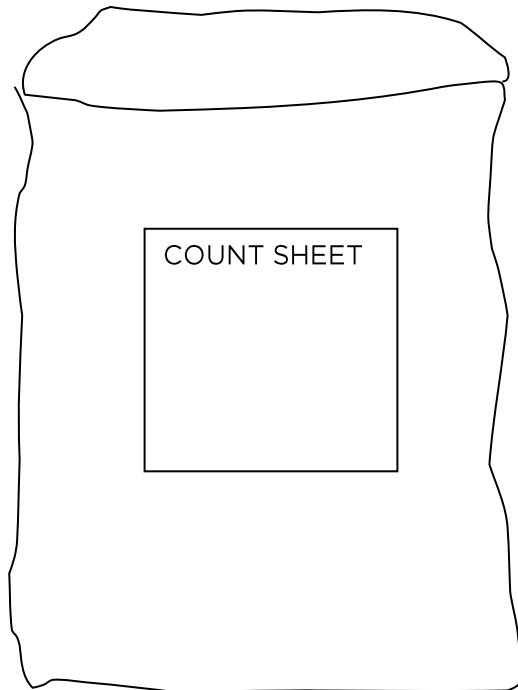


**Step one:** Insert plastic liner inside cardboard bin. Place a TBS sticker to the outside of the container on plastic liner (please do not stick label directly on to bin). Write your customer # on the sticker.

**Step two:** Remove or "X" out any stickers/labels that have been placed from previous shipments.

Use separate bins for clear and other/colour glass. If you are unsure of which category the bottles fall under, put the bottles in the other/colour glass bin. Indicate the quantity that is in the bin by recording the information on the count sheet provided by your supplying DC. Securely attach the count sheet to the outside of the bin. The count sheet must be attached to the bin for shipping.

# Preparing plastic bottles (PET), tetra paks, & bag-in-a-box containers for shipping



Plastic bottles (PET), tetra paks, and bag-in-box containers are to be separately placed in clear bags. The plastic portion of bag-in-box containers should be taken out of the cardboard box to be counted and shipped in a clear plastic bag. The box can simply be recycled with other cardboard.

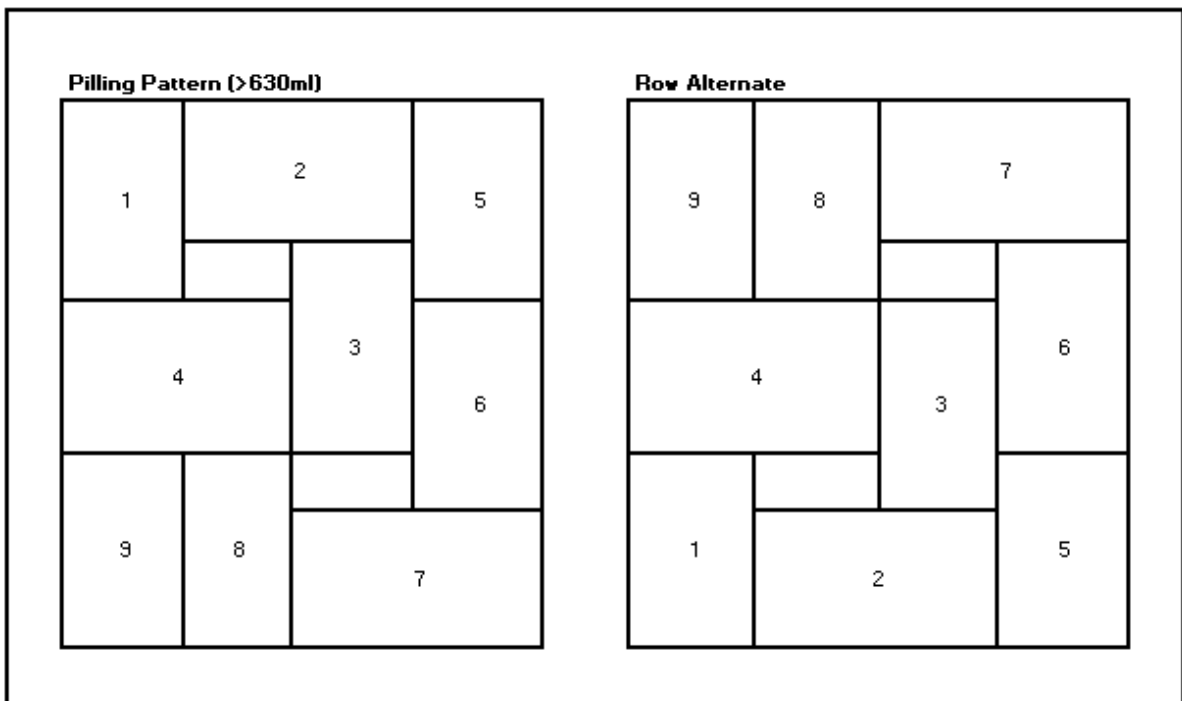
Track the quantity of each bag on a count sheet provided by your supplying DC. Complete a separate count sheet for each bag. Record your customer # on the count sheet and attach to the bag for shipping.

When justified, plastic empty can containers (PECCs) may instead be used with a “check-off sheet” to denote the number of units in the container.

# ODRP Containers - Pallet Construction

When palletizing full cases of 20-cent glass ODR bottles, use the guide below for proper placement. If palletizing 10-cent glass ODR bottles, follow the same casing and palletizing procedures as outlined for TBS bottles. The mixing of \$0.10 containers and \$0.20 containers in cartons on the same row is not permitted, with the exception of the top row of a return pallet.

Table L-3: Cases of containers  $\geq$  630 ml



- The row piling pattern must be alternated as depicted in each table to ensure stability.
- Only Brewers Standard Pallets must be utilized for the return of empties.
- A maximum of 9 cases (12 bottles per case) must be placed on each row.
- Two 6-pack cartons can be used in place of one 12-pack case.
- Palletized empty bottles  $>$  630 ml must either be tied on every row or the entire pallet must be shrink wrapped.
- When piling cartons with various heights on a single row, attention must be taken in order to ensure pallet stability when additional rows are added. When possible, place these cartons on top pallet rows to ensure stability.



# Ceramic & Porcelain Containers

Ceramic and porcelain containers MUST be kept separate from glass containers.

Glass cannot be recycled to high end use when it is contaminated with ceramic.

It takes only ONE 800-gram ceramic bottle to contaminate 88,000 pounds of glass.

Please keep these containers separate from glass bottles. Ship ceramic containers in a sealed box marked "CERAMIC" that is kept separate from glass containers.

Listed below are examples of brands that have been produced in a ceramic or porcelain container:

**Azulejos Anejo**  
Gallon Of Love



**Beau's Lug-Tread**



**Catrina Reposado**  
Tequila



**Clase Azul Tequila**



**Confucius Family Liquor**



**Fen Chiew 30 Years**  
Spirit



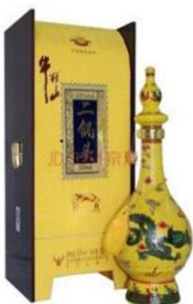
**Grand Mayan Ultra**  
Extra Anejo



**Kinmen Guardian Lion**  
Kaoliang Liquor



**Niu Lan Shan Er Guo**  
Tou 50 Year Old



**Samuel Adams**  
Utopias



**Skelly Anejo**



**Yunjiu Qinghua**



# **Secondary Packaging**

## **Plastic**

The Beer Store accepts back all of the packaging involved in our sales to be recycled. Customers using one-use plastic bags from retailers other than TBS should be encouraged to next time use a re-usable bag or a beer box to transport empty containers back to The Beer Store. However, we will still accept the plastic bag for recycling as a customer service.

Plastic bags are to be returned in a clear plastic bag provided by your DC. You do not need to affix a count sheet or sticker to the bag.

## **Cardboard**

Cardboard can be returned in either a green plastic bin (PECC) or cardboard bin (gaylord). The bins do not need a liner. Please break down the cardboard prior to placing in the bin to increase space. Selling supplies such as Beer Store paper bags and 8-pack carriers can be mixed with the cardboard. Please do not mix twine or cord with the cardboard.