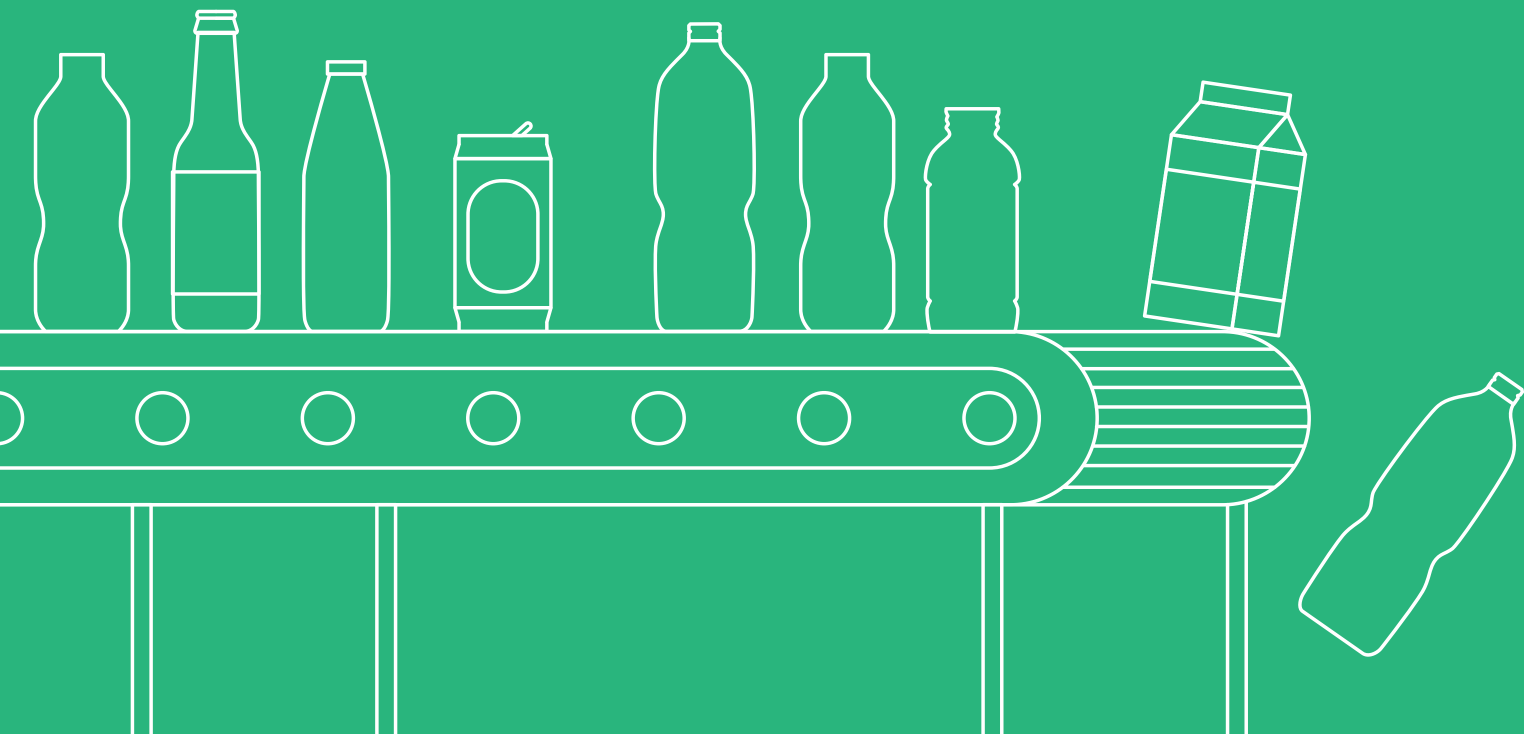
THE GREEN GUIDE

A guide to becoming a best practice and profitable container refund point operator.



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1.0 INTRODUCTION

Container for Change is Queensland's container refund scheme, introduced in 2018 with an ambitous goal: no container goes to waste.

Our scheme not only makes our state a cleaner, greener place to live – it positively impacts people and the communities they live in.

As a container refund point (CRP) operator, you are often the face of Containers for Change for our customers, and play a key role in their overall experience.

We've put together The Green Guide to support you and your team, and make your business as successful and profitable as it can be. This guide provides support in the following ways:

1. to help you provide a positive customer experience that drives repeat customers,

2. to increase capacity at your depot so you can service more customers with fewer resources and costs, and

3. to fast-track your business's growth so you can increase the volume of containers returned and therefore, your profitability.

The advice in this guide was gathered from the practices of the most successful Containers for Change operators who have excelled in these areas, as well as feedback from Queenslanders who use and don't use the scheme. By using this guide, you'll be taking advantage of the very best principles and practices currently available to make your business a success.

1.1 BACKGROUND

Before Containers for Change, Queensland had the second lowest recycling rate in Australia with only 48% recovery. As a result, our sunshine state was the most littered in the country with 45% more plastic rubbish found in the Queensland environment than in the rest of Australia.

The Queensland container refund scheme (CRS) – Containers for Change – was introduced on 1 November 2018 to help clean up our beautiful state by increasing recycling rates and reducing waste.

Container Exchange (COEX) is the not-for-profit organisation appointed by the State Government to run Containers for Change in Queensland. The scheme is funded by beverage manufacturers, who cover the cost of operating the scheme.

Together, we are working towards our strategic goals of recovering 85% of containers sold though the scheme – which is the most ambitious target in Australia.

Achieving this target is heavily reliant on Queenslanders participating in the scheme, which is why the customer experience offered by CRP operators is so important.

We're working towards our strategic target of recovering 85% of containers sold.

1.2 EFFORT VERSUS REWARD RATIO

When interviewing customers, we found one of the key reasons they become dissatisfied with the scheme is the effort versus reward ratio. Haven't we all had an experience at a store or restaurant where we made the decision to never return after a poor experience?

That is, how much effort do customers need to put into returning containers to justify the reward they receive, either in monetary value or in the principle of helping the environment.

We know from research that the customer service people receive at a refund point is the main reason for a positive or negative experience.

With this in mind, it's important to listen and respond accordingly to feedback from customers, to help improve your process and their experience in the future.

While you may focus on what's required to collect, count, store and dispatch materials, it's important to think about the experience you create for your customers.

1. satisfied customers are more likely to return to your depot with more containers and are also more likely to tell their friends and family to visit your site, and

2. happy customers returning more frequently increases your volumes and therefore, the amount of money your business earns.

The most successful operators are those who understand they are in a people business first, and a material collection business second.

1.3 WHO ARE YOUR CUSTOMERS?

Knowing what motivates your regular customers can assist you and your team to find ways to reduce their effort and turn them into regulars who return more often.

There are many different types of people who choose to become customers of Containers for Change, each with various motivations. You can probably recognise some of these in your own customer base.

The most common customers we saw during our research included the below.

Most common customers

Cashie kings
These customers are motivated by the idea of some extra cash. They are typically inconsistent recyclers but will participate for the refund if it's easy and convenient for them.

Small change makers
These customers are often Queensland families, seeking small ways to ease the costs of living. They are financially motivated and have few barriers in making container collection part of their everyday routine.

Environmentalists
Helping the environment is an essential part of these customers' identity – they know it's the right thing to do and they want to set an example for others. Environmentalists tend to understand the recycling process well, and will find a way to return or donate their containers, even if they have a small amount.

Money makers
These customers make big returns for big money, with some doing it as a secondary source of income or side hustle. They typically prefer returning to depots because they can handle the larger volume returns.

Community contributors
These customers are motivated by helping others and more likely to participate in Containers for Change if it benefits a charity or community group. As an individual, they are more likely to use the yellow bin than other segments.

Containerless crusaders
These customers feel strongly about recycling and helping the environment, but don't use many containers. Unless they have a reason to collect or donate for others, the effort may not seem worth the reward.

2.0
BEST PRACTICE CONTAINER REFUND POINTS

Whatever the type of CRP you operate, providing your customers with a top notch experience will be crucial to keeping their business.

Whether it's a bag drop or a full-service depot, there are tips and tricks to ensure you're offering an experience that can't be beaten.

2.1 DEPOTS

Running your depot as efficiently as possible and providing quality professional customer service is crucial to your business' success.

Signage

Many customers have found it difficult to find some depots, even when looking for them. Signage should be placed for maximum public exposure, and all traffic and safety signage must be clearly visible with Containers for Change branding. The signage must be approved by Container Exchange (COEX) and if you would like to use your own branding, ensure it's no more than a third of the branding being advertised (see section 5.2).

You should seek approval from your local council before displaying the signage if you're on a main road or if the signage is not on your property.

Educating first-time customers

A customer's first container refund point (CRP) experience is an opportunity to make them a customer for life. Depots with very strong repeat business take the time to educate first-time customers on how the scheme works, eligible and ineligible containers, and redemption procedures for that depot. It's time well spent to ensure they continue to return to your site.

Site layout for drive-through depots

The best depot site locations contain multiple points of entry to cater to both the public and logistic providers. Public traffic flow should be one direction and preferably in a clockwise direction if the site permits with one entry point and one exit point. Ideally there are multiple lanes for traffic flow. If you offer a bag drop service, you should have a separate lane for those customers who want to drop and go so they don't have to queue behind those wanting to wait for their refund.

Traffic management

Safe and efficient traffic flow is important for all types of depots. For more details please see section 8.3.

Customer management for logistics providers

Most CRPs will have trucks arriving during trading hours. If logistics and customer service cannot operate safely simultaneously, customers may be asked to move out of the way to assist truck access. These interruptions can impact your customers' experience at your site. If this is the case, you should have a system to keep track of customers' positions in the line to avoid queue jumping; like handing customers numbers in chronological order before asking them to move out of the queue.

Walk-in depots

Key issues for customers of walk-in depots include:

Parking

Convenient parking close to the building is important to reduce the effort required to carry containers. See section 8.4 for more details.

Trolleys

Top tier depots provide convenient trolleys to assist in moving larger volumes of containers.

Walkways

Walkways should be clearly marked with line markings regularly maintained to ensure customer safety. Operators need to ensure that walkways are kept clear and are not obstructed.

Customer waiting areas

Customer waiting areas should be clearly defined and you may consider having a barricade set up for times when customer traffic is heavy to assist in managing queues. It can be helpful to add some signage at busy times so people have an idea of how long the wait time will be.

In-house bag drops

Bag drops are both convenient and low effort for customers and are an excellent way to flatten out the peaks and troughs in your depot traffic. For more details please see section 2.1.1.

Front of house concierge

Larger sites find it very beneficial to have a concierge to assist in directing traffic, responding to customer enquiries, and assist customers to unload their containers. For more details please see section 3.6.

Have fun with it

There's not much fun in returning bottles and cans but a few operators have found ways to spice up their depots for their customers.

These engaging ideas include:

- painting your site Containers for Change green to really stand out,
- engage local artists to paint a mural at your site – why not tell the recycling journey to your customers or have a local destination painted on the wall, or
- having televisions or tablets set up to show the Containers for Change's Change Maker series, your to-date volume or the member numbers of local charities.

2.1.1 BAG DROPS AT DEPOTS

Bag drops are convenient for customers who have large volumes or are time poor as it enables them to drop off their containers to the secure depot and leave the site with minimum delay. This is the sort of low effort versus reward that makes cashing in a lot easier for customers.

This service will also assist you to manage customer volumes and wait times as big volume customers will hold up processing if they wait for their containers to be counted. Bag drops also offer you the ability to take advantage of your site's quiet times to count bag drop volumes, thereby increasing staff efficiency at the depot. If you offer a bag drop, you should advertise this to your customers, particularly during busy times.

To ensure a best practice in-house bag drop service, consider:

Choosing the right space

The bag drop should be in a secure place at the depot, keeping the area separate from the parking, counting and sorting areas. The bag drop should be located where staff can keep an eye on it to prevent theft or member number swapping.

If you don't have a designated spot at your site for the bag drop, best practice operators ensure there is an express lane for those looking to drop and go. Without this, the convenience of a bag drop is eliminated, as the customer still has to wait in line to be served.

If possible, make the area accessible to the public 24/7 to capture more volumes. This could be via a chute which customers can open from outside of the depot to deposit their bags. If it's accessible outside of business hours, the area must be secure to prevent theft and have sufficient lighting so customers can safely visit the site at night.

Clear instructions

So the bag drop can run independently from your depot services, ensure you have clear signage at the bag drop area so customers understand the process without needing to engage staff. The signage should include how to sign up for a member number, how the bag drop works and what containers are eligible for a refund.

Helpful equipment

Think about what the customer needs to complete a bag drop. Where possible, you should provide bags, pens, and labels or paper and tape for them to write their member number and attach to their bags. Allowing the customer to print their member number via a tablet and label printer is ideal. You could even position an additional standing tablet right next to the bag drop area for customers to sign up for a member number here or check if their containers are eligible here.

Counting

It's important your staff process any bag drop volumes within 24 hours. Remember, money makers or those with big volumes are fans of bag drops. It's in your best interest to keep these customers happy with a quick turnaround time to ensure they come back to your depot the next time they're ready to cash in. Not to mention that it's a bad look to your customers if the bags at the bag drop area are piling up.

2.2 UNSTAFFED BAG DROPS

Unstaffed bag drop container refund points (CRPs) are an excellent way to increase your volumes. These facilities are available at any time and if managed correctly, are an easy method for customers to receive their refunds.

There are a few key practices used by successful operators worth considering:

Choosing the right receptacle

When done right, the most effective bag drop receptacles are charity-style bins and shipping containers. However, you must consider what volumes the CRP will see and how often you're able to empty the receptacle since they have different capacity levels. For example, charity-style bins cater to areas with a smaller population or lower redemption, whereas shipping containers are suitable for areas with high redemption and large customer numbers.

Processing times

Whichever receptacle is chosen, they should be emptied regularly to ensure the CRP is never full, complaints are not received and the customer isn't waiting beyond an unreasonable time. Once you've processed the containers under their member number, the customer should receive their refund immediately thanks to real-time payments. Best practice operators will pick up and process the containers in less than:

- three business days for metropolitan areas,
- five business days for regional areas, or
- seven business days for rural areas.

Consistent servicing schedule

Given they are unstaffed CRPs, regular inspections and servicing needs to occur to avoid untidy or defaced receptacles, low bag or label supplies, broken technology, or the CRP being full or overflowing. Successful operators perform daily inspections to make sure they're safe, clean and tidy, and provide replacement bags and labels.

If you're providing bags and labels, you're making a commitment and setting that expectation for customers. If you cannot effectively manage the supply of bags and labels, you should request that customers use their own bags and labels.

Choosing a location

The location of an unstaffed bag drop situated away from your depot needs to take into account access to local parking, the safety of customers and the security of the containers.

Best practice bag drops are available to the public 24/7 with sufficient lighting to ensure customers are safe to visit the bag drop at night.

Be seen

The bag drop should be clearly visible to the public with Containers for Change branding. If you're using your own branding make sure it's no more than a third of the branding. For more information on branding, please see section 5.1.

Clear instructions

As these facilities are self-service and unstaffed, it's vital the instructions on how they operate, restrictions on container eligibility and processing expectations are clear and attached to the receptacle, and the Containers for Change Contact Centre and your contact information is in an obvious spot.

Ineligible containers

Although you're not required to handle ineligible containers, it's important you still enter these into the point of sale (POS) system. If they're entered into POS, the customer will see in their transaction history that they returned ineligible containers and that's why their refund is shorter than expected. This will minimise complaints about bag drop short payments from those customers who unknowingly return ineligible containers.

Best practice operators reuse the bags that are returned via bag drops.

2.3 REVERSE VENDING MACHINES (RVMS)

RVMs can offer a 24/7 self-service experience for customers that can be efficient, low cost, extend your hours of operation and boost your volume. RVMs may be the return method offered at your depot (RVM depots) or they may be unstaffed (stand-alone).

Below is what best practice RVMs look like:

Signage

Stand-alone RVMs should have the Containers for Change brand clearly visible. Stand-alone and depot RVMs should use signage to explain how the RVMs work, what materials they accept and any limitations of the technology such as not accepting containers that are crushed or without a label.

Bag drop option

As an alternative to waiting for an RVM at a depot, a bag drop option should also be available to those customers who prefer not to wait. This will capture those customers who are time poor and money makers who prefer bag drops, as well as reducing the number of customers in the queues.

Front of house concierge

Customers will need to be educated on how to use the RVMs correctly for a quicker and easier experience. A staff member can act as a supervisor or concierge and assist customers with their returns and educate them about the technology or scheme in the process.

Customer assistance

During times without a concierge available, a 'call for help' bell or button must be available at the RVM so when a customer has trouble, they can notify staff members that they require assistance.

If you operate stand-alone RVMs, your technical support contact number must be clearly visible on the machine. Failure to provide technical support to customers when they need it may result in complaints and the customer not returning to your unstaffed RVMs.

Any technology introduced into the scheme is subject to an accreditation process by Container Exchange (COEX). If you're thinking about introducing RVM technology please contact your Network Lead before entering into a binding agreement with an equipment vendor.

2.4 POP-UPS

Successful operators recommend the following tips as best practice for a pop-up container refund point (CRP).

Be seen

Make sure the site is clearly visible to the public. You can do this by using sandwich boards (A-frames) and street signage for directions and having the Containers for Change brand clearly visible to the public via branded marquees, feather banners or vehicle signage at the site.

Educate your customer

Educate the customer on the returns process, the expected payment times and trading hours of the site to make return visits for the customer more efficient. This can all be done through signage or while serving the customer.

Keep wait times short

Wait times should be kept to a minimum to ensure a good customer experience. This can be done by educating the customer on what information is required on the bags via signage, providing a label printer or labels and markers, and also assisting the customer with setting up a member number if needed.

If you're counting on the spot, you should also offer a bag drop service where you count the customer's containers at the end of the scheduled time if it gets busy.

Be consistent in processing refunds

All material should be sorted and counted within 24 hours. After collection, transport the material back to the depot as soon as possible and have a designated employee or two to sort and count the material straight away so the refund to the customer can be completed.

Stick to a schedule

Operating hours should be consistent and convenient for the customer. To maximise the number of customers you can reach, schedule your operating hours around school pick-up and drop-off, business hours and weekends. The customers that were interviewed during research for this guide revealed that limited hours and trading only on weekdays were common pain points.

The Containers for Change website is how most customers keep track of your trading hours, so make sure you adhere to these advertised hours. If there are last minute changes to these hours due to unexpected situations such as weather or staffing issues, let your Network Lead know immediately so we can advise customers and avoid complaints.

2.5 HOME COLLECTION

For customers unable to return bags, boxes or bins of plastic and glass bottles to their nearest recycling centre, COEX also offers a free home collection service in selected Queensland suburbs.

The service is particularly beneficial for those with limited mobility, the elderly, and others who cannot attend a Container Refund Point.

'Container Collect' allows customers to arrange for collection of eligible containers, which are then picked up by an operator-appointed driver and taken to a container refund point for processing.

The service is only available for residential properties and customers must have a minimum of 100 eligible containers and have a member number to qualify for home collection.

As an operator performing container collections for the Containers for Change scheme, your primary responsibility is to ensure that the scheduled containers are collected, handled and delivered to the appropriate container refund point in compliance with the scheme's requirements.

How it works

Customers schedule collections of eligible containers using the Container for Change app. You can manage the Container Collect process in the business partner portal, allowing you to:

- retrieve bookings
- plan the order of your collections through the portal for your driver(s)
- see bag size (small, medium and large)
- share driver updates for bookings in real-time via mobile site
- update booking status
- postpone pick up (as a last resource in case of an issue)

Drivers will have their own logins to the portal, allowing them to view and manage the collections. When they arrive at the customer address, drivers will:

- Open up the booking details
- Add a photo or notes if required (e.g. Bags were not suitable for collection)
- Update the status (successful or unsuccessful) and validate.
- Once validated, the system will push an SMS to the customer notifying them of the status change.

Collection status

Below is a recap of the different collections statuses drivers can lodge:

Successful	Collection of bag(s) was successful
Unsuccessful (no access)	You could not successfully access the property e.g. Gate Code required or obstruction
Unsuccessful (bags not found)	Bags could not be located
Unsuccessful (tried to contact)	The driver tried to contact the customer with no luck and the collection was unsuccessful
Unsuccessful (not suitable for collection)	Bag(s) were not safe and/or suitable for transport e.g. Broken Bags; not secure
Unsuccessful (other reason)	Unsuccessful and does not fit into above categories

For more details about Container Collect, including a guide to the business partner portal, please reach out to your Network Lead.

3.0 CUSTOMER SERVICE AND STAFF

As a container refund point (CRP) operator, you are the face of Containers for Change and your interactions with customers leave lasting impressions.

It's important to recognise that running a CRP is a people business first and foremost. It's important your staff are retail-oriented and trained to deliver this high-quality service to ensure a positive customer experience and therefore, secure repeat customers to make your business a success.

Read on to see how a best practice approach to customer service can help your business thrive. With these elements in place, your CRP is in the best position to deliver the consistent experience that will keep your customer coming back and your profits going up!

3.1 BEST PRACTICE

Providing customers a good customer experience is the key to engaging that person keeps coming back to your refund point.

Here are some tried and tested ways to help your team ensure every customer's visit is enjoyable.

In delivering customer service, successful operators generally follow the below guidelines:

Don't forget the simple stuff

You should consider the basics of a good customer experience, such as smiling, greeting customers as they arrive, apologising to those waiting in line and being personable. It doesn't take a lot of effort once these things become a habit and they can go a long way in the customer's eyes. A personal touch like remembering a customer's name or connecting with them personally can also make a big difference.

Reduce customer effort

While the cash incentive is a motivator, the effort required to return containers versus the 10 cent reward can be difficult for some to justify. Any way you can make things easier for your customers, the more likely they'll choose to keep returning and using your business. Think bag drops, trolleys, express lanes or some friendly assistance from the front of house concierge (see section 3.6).

Always respond professionally to complaints

In a people business, complaints are always going to happen. However, the key is to always handle them in a professional and respectful manner, and whenever possible, attempt to meet the customer's expectation. More information on complaint handling is available in section 3.8.1.

Understand why your regulars return

Customers choose to return containers for many reasons. If you have an opportunity to understand the motivation of your regular customers, you'll be able to build a stronger connection to them, and potentially find ways to make their process easier with less effort.

Invest in your staff's customer service skills

It's a people business, so retail-orientated staff are often a good fit for those roles at container refund points (CRPs) that require interaction with customers (e.g. counters and front of house concierges). Successful operators provide customer service training to their teams and regular sessions to refresh their skills, and talk about challenging situations and how they were handled.

3.2 STAFF INDUCTION

Your team members are the face of Containers for Change and it's up to them to deliver an experience that encourages customers to come back again and again.

Staff inductions or onboarding are good opportunities to set expectations with team members on how they work, the role they play and the importance of being good brand ambassadors both for your business and Containers for Change. This guide should be included in your staff induction, perhaps pulling out the sections most relevant for the position. You also need to consider the below.

Workplace health and safety (WHS)

Safety requirements are the top priority in any staff induction. Each container refund point (CRP) operates under a WHS Plan and staff should be required to complete safety training based on this before commencing work. This is for the benefit of yourself, your team and your customers.

It's a people business

Good customer service will make the container refund experience enjoyable and will promote repeat business. This can be done by always being polite and greeting customers, providing a fast and accurate service, maintaining a safe environment for the public, and answering any queries the public may have. You should consider these requirements when hiring your staff.

Given they're dealing with customers, it's also important your staff are aware of how to deal with difficult customers (see section 3.8) and your complaints handling policy (see section 3.8.1)

Solid knowledge of the scheme

Staff should have a good working knowledge of the scheme (see section 3.2), so they can perform all tasks required of a CRP and be able to discuss the process and benefits of the scheme to customers who may ask questions.

Container eligibility

What containers are eligible and ineligible must be included in the staff induction. This will prevent counting discrepancies and material contamination which has big impacts on your business. A visible guide or list of eligible and ineligible containers should always be readily available to the staff for reference (at a minimum, one of the eligibility posters available on Brand Hub), and they should know the ways to double check eligibility (see section 6.1.2). This should also cover recognising ineligibles and non-containers (see section 6.1.1).

Counting methods

The counting process should always be fast and transparent for the customer. This can be achieved by counting in multiples and keeping a visible running tally of eligible containers counted. While staff will get faster with practice, you should walk them through some counting methods when they first start. You can see more on best practice methods in section 6.2.

Refunds

Staff should be trained to discuss the benefits of having a member number to the customer and the process of how to sign up for one (see section 7.1). This will allow the customer to use the bag drop option if needed and involves less cash handling for your business.

Point of sale (POS) system

All staff should be required to read and complete the POS system training guide in the staff induction. This will ensure all staff are familiar with the software to reduce administrative effort and time spent on POS tasks. Simulated transactions can be performed in the training. You can see section 11.3 for more on POS.

Deliver an experience that encourages customers to come back again and again.

3.3 MOST FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS (FAQS)

It's important your staff are equipped to answer questions about the scheme customers may ask. Staff should at least be briefed on these top five FAQs.

What is Containers for Change?

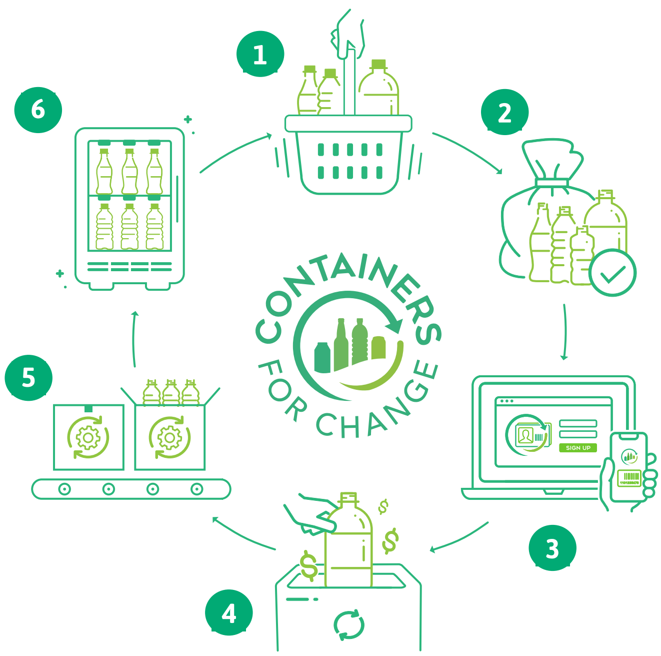
Prior to the schemes' introduction on 1 November 2018, beverage containers were the second most littered item in our environment and Queensland had one of the lowest recycling rates in Australia at around 44%. Plus, almost three billion beverage containers are generated each year in our state alone!

The container refund scheme (CRS), Containers for Change, was introduced into Queensland to reduce litter and increase Queensland's recycling rates. The scheme aims to incentivise recycling by offering a 10 cent refund for every eligible beverage container returned to any authorised container refund point (CRP) across Queensland. Any container returned to a CRP is recycled into new materials for a cleaner Queensland.

What happens with the collected material?

CRP operators sort the containers into material types after they're returned by customers. Generally, the sorted containers are transported to a processing facility. Here, the processor prepares the material for recycling – usually by crushing the materials into bales. Accredited recyclers purchase the materials off a secure online auction portal run by Container Exchange (COEX) which the buyers recycle into new products. If the materials are recycled into a new eligible container, the journey starts again!

How does the scheme work?



1. **Buy** and enjoy your favourite drinks
2. **Collect** eligible containers to receive a 10 cent refund for each
3. **Create a member number** to use at any container refund point to receive your refund via EFT or PayPal
4. **Return** your eligible containers to a container refund point
5. Returned **containers are processed and sold** to accredited recyclers
6. New recycled drink containers and other **products are created**

Who funds the scheme?

Containers for Change is funded by beverage manufacturers who sell eligible beverage containers in Queensland, taking responsibility for reducing the environmental impact of their containers. Each manufacturer contributes a fee for every eligible container they sell in Queensland to COEX, the not-for-profit that manages the scheme.

Who is COEX?

COEX is the not-for-profit company created to establish and manage Containers for Change. It's responsible for managing Containers for Change and its operators across Queensland.

COEX is focussed on reducing beverage container litter and increasing recycling to keep Queensland beautiful. Its responsibilities include:

- collecting funds from beverage manufacturers to fund the cost of the scheme,
- overseeing the operation of contracted CRPs, logistics providers, processors and other service providers required to deliver the scheme, and
- overseeing the online auction portal where accredited recyclers can purchase the containers collected from the scheme to be recycled.

You can find out more about COEX at their website or by emailing enquiries@containerexchange.com.au

Why are some beverage containers not eligible for a refund?

The CRS aims to reduce beverage container litter in the environment. The eligible containers approved by the Queensland Government are those most commonly consumed outside of the home and so, are more likely to end up in the environment. They also mostly align with the containers eligible in other CRS schemes operating in Australia.

Some ineligible containers are also difficult to process and recycle whether that be from the size of the container or the material it's made from. Accepting these containers may increase scheme costs beyond a sustainable amount.

Don't forget that most ineligible containers can still be recycled through local government recycling programs.

When training your staff, make sure to show them the Containers for Change website for more valuable information about the scheme as well as the full list of FAQs.

If staff or the onsite supervisor are not sure of the answers to other technical questions, they should direct customers to the Containers for Change website or Contact Centre at 13 42 42 or enquiries@containersforchange.com.au

3.4 UNIFORMS

Uniforms are important for your team and your customers with a number of benefits. These include:

- helping the customer identify staff from other customers and, in turn, improve customer service,
- reducing harm to workers when the uniform is workplace health and safety compliant,
- promoting and advertising your business both at work and outside of the workplace,
- ensuring staff present a professional standard of dress to customers, and
- helping staff feel a part of a team.

Uniforms can include but are not limited to caps or wide brim hats if workers are in the sun, long sleeve shirts and pants, safety boots, and jackets for winter.

Branding

Branded uniforms can make your staff look professional and can help promote pride and team spirit in your workplace. The Containers for Change logo is a visual identifier to customers of your staff and that you're an authorised container refund point (CRP) so it should be included on your uniforms.

Branding may also include having the Containers for Change logo, your business logo, business colours and workers' names on the uniform.

Personal protective equipment (PPE)

Under Queensland workplace safety legislation, PPE should be provided to your workforce as required to minimise risk when it's unable to be eliminated.

Although PPE is required, you can use it to your advantage and integrate it into your branded uniforms. PPE includes:

- hi-visibility clothing (a safety assistant with customer, operational and logistics traffic),
- long sleeves and pants (protection from UV radiation and cuts from containers),
- safety boots (protection from broken glass and dropped objects),
- hat (protecting from UV radiation),
- eye protection (protection from projectiles and glass), and
- hearing protection (protection from smashing glass).

Your PPE should reflect the identified hazards on site and must also meet the applicable Australian Standards.

3.5 TOOLBOX MEETINGS

Toolbox meetings are an excellent way to share safety and business updates with your team.

Best practice meetings follow these guidelines:

- keep track on a log sheet of who was at the meeting,
- be consistent with meetings, but if there's an event or issue you should conduct a meeting about it if it's outside the schedule,
- have a good sense of what you would like to discuss (e.g. customer experience learnings, volume update or safety alerts),
- toolbox meetings provide an opportunity to discuss workplace health and safety items (e.g. talking about incidents that have occurred and how to prevent these from happening again, or the hazards identified and the controls put in place),
- allow time for staff to ask questions, and
- take note of any action items and resolve them.

An example toolbox meeting template from Workplace Health and Safety Queensland is available on the Operator Hub.

3.6 FRONT OF HOUSE CONCIERGE

For some depots, having a concierge to assist with the flow of customers, provide information, and assist in lowering customer effort is an excellent idea.

Some simple ways a front of house concierge can speed up wait times and improve the customer experience at your depot during peak periods include:

- being available for enquiries such as how the refund process works at your site or what happens to the returned containers,
- directing customers to express lanes if available,
- explaining what containers are eligible and ineligible,
- explaining what a member number is and how to sign up for one,
- assisting with bag drop services for those customers who don't want to wait in the queue for the count,
- encouraging customers to remove lids,
- troubleshooting any machines, and
- assisting customers who are having difficulty carrying containers into the depot.

A front of house concierge can also act as the first contact point for customers if something needs to be actioned immediately or in case of emergency (e.g. spilt liquid, a broken machine, mediating a dispute between customers or a medical emergency). As a result, the concierge should be easy for customers to recognise. Using the Containers for Change brand can do this with the logo and colours recognisable, not to mention they also stand out. However, if the concierge is moving between the front and the back of site, make sure their uniform is still a personal protective equipment (PPE) product. A high-vis branded vest can tick both boxes. See section 3.4 for more on branded uniforms.

This role should be given to the member/s of your team with solid knowledge of the scheme and high-quality customer service skills.

Some operators may choose to have a concierge during peak times only, such as weekends or days after public holidays, as a way to manage the cost. If this is the case, then a 'call for help' bell or button must be available for customers to use when the front of house is unstaffed.

A front of house concierge can speed up wait times and improve the customer experience at your depot during peak periods

3.7 EMPLOYEE DIVERSITY AND SUPPORT

Disability Employment Service providers are widely available and can be easily found online. Service providers will assist you with the training and placement of suitable candidates for your business. Providers will come out to your site to discuss your requirements and assess the suitability of the tasks for prospective candidates. They will also provide advice and assistance in accessing government programs in employing people with disabilities.

An Employee Assistance Program (EAP) is also a service you should consider offering. The counselling program aims to help any worker maintain their mental wellbeing by dealing with work-related or personal concerns.

The Work Health and Safety Act 2011 requires employers to ensure workplaces are safe for all workers; physically and mentally safe. Employers also have an ethical responsibility to protect and promote the health, safety and welfare of their employees. EAPs is one of the ways organisations can meet their legal and ethical obligations.

3.8 DEALING WITH DIFFICULT CUSTOMERS

Even if you do all the right things, it's inevitable you'll have challenges with some customers. As a result, it's important to have a process in place for when a customer is negatively impacting staff or the business.

This may be due to:

- unacceptable behaviour towards staff or other customers (including swearing, yelling, threatening and discriminatory language),
- continuous returning of contaminated containers (including syringes, live or dead animals, and waste), or
- being a safety risk to themselves, staff or other customers.

When speaking with these customers or delivering them a warning or ban, you should:

- stay calm,
- be professional,
- keep your voice steady – don't raise it,
- avoid speaking over the customer – this could escalate their behaviour,
- actively listen to the customer – they may make valid points you should consider and it's important they feel you're listening to their concerns,
- avoid taking their comments personally, and
- assume all customers are watching – this will ensure you handle the customer appropriately.

You should not take banning customers lightly, as the customer's outrage could be spread by promoting their version of events via social media, the media or word-of-mouth which could affect your reputation.

As a result, one or two warnings – depending on the severity of the behaviour – should be given to the customer before banning them from your container refund point (CRP).

It's important any warnings or bans are:

- approved by the manager or supervisor on site,
- given to the customer by the manager or supervisor on site (if in person), and
- recorded with the details (name, incident, date, warning number/ ban, CCTV footage) into your system (this could just be via a spreadsheet).

Ultimately, the manager or supervisor on site should make the decision regarding warnings and bans.

It's also important that your staff are across the spreadsheet to ensure alignment across the business. Make sure the process on dealing with difficult customers is documented and clearly outlines what behaviours warrant the triggering of this process, including when warnings and bans should be given.

3.8.1 COMPLAINTS HANDLING

Working in a customer service industry, it's inevitable that you'll receive a complaint about your business at some point; whether this be in person, over the phone or in writing. Complaint handling is an opportunity to turn around the customer's perception of your business and to evolve your policy and procedures to avoid a repeat of the complaint in future.

However, if you don't follow an appropriate procedure, these complaints can escalate and be shared with the wider public via social media, the media or word-of-mouth and as a result, impact your relationship with existing and prospective customers.

Successful operators recommend clearly documenting your complaint handling policy. All staff should be trained on the policy and be clear on everyone's roles and responsibilities during a complaint. This will ensure your staff are aligned and the complaints are handled correctly.

Here is an example of a complaint handling process:

1

Recognise the complaint
While customers may not specifically say, "I would like to lodge a complaint", there are a few ways to recognise when they're making one, which include:

- their tone of voice, their body language and the language they're using – if it's negative, it's most likely a complaint,
- they're expressing dissatisfaction about your business, staff or processes,
- they're asking a negative question which requires investigation or an explanation from you, or
- they compare your CRP to other positive experiences they've had at other sites.

2

Escalate to a manager
A complaint should always be escalated to the manager or supervisor on site. This not only makes the customer feel like you're taking their concerns seriously but allows the senior member of staff to make the decision.

3

Handle the complaint

The person the complaint was made to and the person the complaint was escalated to should follow the below principles when handling a complaint in person or over the phone:

- listen to the customer – they may make valid points you should consider and it's important they feel you're listening to their concerns,
- keep calm,
- be professional,
- keep your voice steady – don't raise it,
- apologise when necessary,
- try not to speak over the customer – this could escalate their behaviour,
- never take it personally, and
- assume all customers are watching – this will push you to handle the customer appropriately.

If you're writing back to the customer you should:

- be professional and polite,
- apologise where necessary,
- make sure you don't sound defensive,
- proof your writing or have someone else look over it,
- ensure you've addressed every concern they've outlined, and
- provide a resolution or outcome.

Your manner when handling the complaint could make or break your relationship with the customer. If you handle a complaint well, it can lead to positive feedback, better customer relationships and an improved business reputation. However, if a complaint is poorly handled, it can lead to negative feedback and a loss of customers.

However, some complaints may not be able to be resolved by an operator and will require the Containers for Change Contact Centre to be involved. Look at section 3.8.2 to see when and how to do this.

4

Record the complaint

You should always record the complaint whether a resolution is reached, or more investigation is required. Copies of complaints should be sent to the Containers for Change Contact Centre with the customer's name and member number so it can be kept on file should they call in the future. Send to enquiries@containersforchange.com.au.

Your records should at least capture:

- the customer's details (including member number, name, phone number, email address),
- when the complaint was made (date and time),
- how the complaint was made (e.g. email, letter, call or in person),
- where the complaint was made (this is important for those who have multiple CRPs and are recording complaints on the one system),
- what they were complaining about, including the full detail and a few-word summary (this can be used as categories for future complaints),
- any supporting attachments (e.g. receipts or CCTV footage),
- how the complaint was handled and what actions were taken, and
- if the customer requires a follow up via phone, email or letter.

You should always record a complaint whether a resolution is reached, or more investigation is required.

5

Take action and follow up

The preference is always to have customer complaints resolved on the spot. However, some complaints may require investigation. It's important to take action and follow up in a timely manner; we recommend a maximum of five business days for investigation and getting back to the customer with a resolution. Make this timeline clear to the customer to manage their expectations. If you need more time to resolve the complaint after five days, let the customer know this.

6

Learn

Complaints are actually a great way to improve your business with an opportunity to gain insights from your customers and their experiences at your site. Proper records will ensure you can monitor how staff are handling complaints and identify any recurring themes.

For example, depending on the size of your business and the number of complaints received, you may wish to review your complaint handling system every two to three weeks to find which themes are recurring. From here, you can make necessary changes to improve your business.

3.8.2 DIRECTING COMPLAINTS TO THE CONTACT CENTRE

Your team should direct customers to contact the Containers for Change Contact Centre if a customer asks them a scheme related question which they're unsure about or if they would like to lodge a complaint about:

- a late payment via member number if you can see in the point of sale (POS) system that the containers have been processed to that ID
- the scheme in general,
- beverage costs associated with the scheme, or
- the Containers for Change website.

Please direct the customers to call 13 42 42 or email enquiries@containersforchange.com.au.

Complaints made to the Contact Centre ensure that Container Exchange (COEX) is tracking any trends we see with the scheme that impact on our customers' experiences. All complaints are collated and provided to management to ensure continuous improvement is implemented across the business.

Other complaints made directly to the Contact Centre will be directed back to you via your Network Lead for a response. To ensure a timely resolution for the customer, operators have five business days to provide an update to their Network Lead. Some best practice operators have nominated a complaint handling champion responsible for tracking and managing these complaints. From receiving the email from the Network Lead to finding a resolution to tracking the complaint, it's their responsibility. This ensures clear ownership and timely resolution of any complaints directed to your business.

3.8.3 CUSTOMERS RETURNING CONTAMINATED CONTAINERS

If a customer is returning contaminated containers, it's at your discretion whether or not you accept these containers. This will of course, depend on the level of contamination which may include syringes, live or dead animals or waste. Care should always be taken as it's the staff that are being exposed to the contamination.

No matter the level, it's important to politely let the customer know any containers they return should be free of contaminants. If they become difficult to deal with, follow the tips outlined in section 3.8.

However, if the customer is using an unstaffed bag drop container refund point (CRP), staff may not have the chance to have this conversation with the customer directly. If they are returning contaminated containers through a bag drop and you're unable to speak with them in person, please report the incident to the Containers for Change Contact Centre at enquiries@containersforchange.com.au.

In the email, please include:

- the customer's member number,
- the site the containers were dropped off at,
- when the containers were likely dropped off or picked up,
- the type of contamination and any supporting images of the contamination,
- if this incident has occurred before, and
- if we're contacting the customer to serve a warning, to serve them their last warning and or to ban the customer from returning any more containers to your site.

Using the customer's member number, the Contact Centre will speak to the customer and alert them to the contaminated containers. Upon your instruction, the Contact Centre will either give the customer a polite warning, let them know any future contaminated containers won't be accepted or to ban the customer from returning any more containers to your site.

If an official warning or ban is given, it's important you record this in the system spoken about in section 3.8.1. Although it may just be an electronic spreadsheet, the system should record the warning or ban to ensure all staff are aligned on the incident.

To avoid containers being contaminated with lids, put clear signage up at your CRP and politely let customers know it would be a big help if they removed lids before cashing in. You should also provide bins for the customers to place any lids into. Remember, if customers aren't removing their lids, it's your contractual responsibility to do so to prevent contamination and safety incidents.

3.9 NOTIFYING YOUR CUSTOMERS OF CHANGES

Customer relationships and loyalty drive the success of your business. An important way to improve relationships with customers and therefore, increasing loyalty and volume, is keeping them informed of any changes you're making that will impact them.

These changes include:

- address change,
- trading hour changes,
- payment option changes,
- returns process change,
- temporary or permanent closures, or
- holiday or special trading hours.

Providing sufficient notice of the above changes will maximise acceptance and minimise complaints from customers. Customers should be notified via a number of your channels to reach as many customers as possible.

These may include:

- social media,
- print materials (see section 5.2), and
- face-to-face communication when they're at the container refund point (CRP).

Customers are informed of changes to your CRP through emails and the Containers for Change website. As a result, it's important to make your Network Lead aware of these changes as soon as possible so we're able to inform your customers with notice.

You must notify your Network Lead a minimum of seven business days out from address and trading hour changes taking place, with special circumstances (e.g. extreme weather, leasing issues or an emergency) excluded. The Network Lead has two business days to approve this change and update the relevant Container Exchange (COEX) departments.

A change cannot come into effect without your Network Lead's approval.

3.10 EDUCATING CUSTOMERS

Every day across the state a customer will be taking part in Containers for Change for the first time. As an operator, you and your team play a key role in the customer's education of how the scheme works. By providing a well-rounded understanding of the scheme, you'll be setting a positive expectation and decreasing the likelihood of customer complaints.

If customers begin to ask questions that go beyond your staff's knowledge of the scheme (see section 3.3 on most frequently asked questions), you can let the customer know more information can be found at www.containersforchange.com.au or by contacting enquiries@containersforchange.com.au or 13 42 42.

Here are a few ways that top successful operators educate their customers.

Signage

Clear signage (see section 4.0) helps customers understand how the scheme works and also what to expect. This may include:

- trading hours,
- container eligibility,
- bulk return requirements, including the licence check and the refund declaration,
- counting procedures,
- the option to return containers in 24-pack cartons or pre-sorted into material types to save them time, or
- a reminder to take lids off containers.

Check out the operator marketing toolkit in section 5.2 to see what educational signage is available to download.

While serving the customer

An opportunity may arise to politely and respectfully explain to your customer more about the scheme to make their experience more enjoyable. In particular, new customers may need a little more assistance, but the time taken to provide information about the scheme will pay off in the long-term.

Depots may wish to point out the quieter times at your site and suggests to customers to visit during these times to avoid delays. You can look at the point of sale (POS) system or at the daily and weekly reports Container Exchange (COEX) send you to determine when these quiet times are.

Positive word-of-mouth from just a customer may help grow your customer base, so it's worth taking the time to make your customers advocates of your business.

4.0
SIGNAGE

Professional, clear signage is essential to attract customers to your business as well as manage the efficient and safe movement of customers, staff and vehicles in and around your container refund point (CRP).

Signage is often a customer's first experience with your business and it can affect the customer experience.

Signage that promotes your site should, at a minimum, have the Containers for Change logo, the 10 cent refund you offer and your trading hours.

Remember, the biggest
You should also utilise the Containers for Change brand with over 90% of Queenslanders aware of the scheme*.

On-site signage can also educate customers to make their experience simpler and quicker and you and your staff's job easier. This can include education on container eligibility, bulk returns, member numbers, bag drops, and safety messages like removing lids from containers or supervising children.

*Veracity survey (January, 2025).

4.1 WAYFINDING

When planning your depot, consider how the use of signage can help to identify your site as an authorised container refund point (CRP) and help to guide customers through your site safely and effectively.

Promotional signage

Operators should consider investing in signage to make the community aware that you're part of the scheme and to help new customers find your site.

Pending council approval, wayfinding signage on the streets near your depot, which may include the use of arrows on A-frames, corflutes or an LED trailer sign, can be utilised to direct your customers to your site. Billboards can also be used to promote your business as well as direct customers to your location. The billboard may include your business name, the 10 cent refund you offer, how far away your site is (e.g. "located 500m on your left") and the Containers for Change logo.

Any promotional signage with the Containers for Change branding must be sent to marketing@containerexchange.com.au for approval, which is typically given within two business days. If you would just like advice on your own branded marketing, you may also email the example/s to that address.

On-site signage

Each depot receives one Containers for Change sign prior to commencement of operation to identify the site as an authorised CRP. While additional signage will be at the operator's discretion, it's in your business interest to take advantage of on-site signage to ensure a smooth experience for your staff and customers.

In order for customers to understand the flow of your site, clearly identify and label an entry point and include a "Conditions of Entry" sign. Not only does this help traffic pedestrians or cars in the correct direction, it also sets expectations from the moment a customer enters the site.

For drive-through sites, more wayfinding signage inline with your Traffic Management Plan is incredibly important. Drivers need to know where to stop, which direction to go and when they're allowed to go there. While you may have staff ushering the cars through, clear signage is more effective, in regard to cost and the customer experience. If you have an usher, they should be supporting the signage but not be the only method of wayfinding for customers.

No matter where you use on-site wayfinding signage, ensure it is professional, clear and legible. If a customer finds your site too difficult to use, it's likely they will go elsewhere or stop using the scheme altogether.

Operators should work closely with their Network Leads to ensure the safe and effective traffic flow is managed well with clear signage.

On-site signage should also include educational messages. More information on this can be found in section 9.2.

4.2 EDUCATIONAL SIGNAGE

Every container refund point (CRP) should use well placed signage to assist in educating customers. Not only does clear signage make the customer experience easier and manage their expectations, but it also allows your staff to get on with usual business.

For customers

Must-have signs to educate your customers include:

- what is eligible and ineligible,
- how to sign up for a member number,
- the requirements for bulk returns,
- a reminder to remove lids before cashing in,
- site entry requirements and rules, and
- all required safety signage.

You should also consider the below.

- For depots using manual counting, consider how a “count in progress” sign could allow your staff to concentrate on their counts and therefore, reduce complaints of miscounts or perceived rudeness of the counter when they don’t interact with the customer.
- For pop-ups and bag drops, signage might advise customers how to use the self-service label printer, or to write their phone number or name associated with the member number on the label in case there’s an issue with the code.
- Use signage so new customers can easily understand what’s required from them. Outline the process and make it as simple as possible so it doesn’t overwhelm them.
- Signage can also form part of your business security plan by deterring theft or wrongdoing through using simple signs such as “no cash left on premises” or “surveillance cameras in use”, or by displaying details of your security company. Standard security signage can be purchased from a local stationery shop such as Officeworks.

Some of these posters are ready to go for your use and can be found on Brand Hub. To read more and get the link, see section 5.2.

For staff

You should also consider internal signage for staff. As a minimum, this should include:

- all required safety alerts, instructions and signage, and
- their responsibility when accepting bulk returns.

4.2.1 ENCOURAGING THE RIGHT CUSTOMER BEHAVIOUR

When building your customer base, consider educating and encouraging your customers to play a more active part in the recycling process as this can result in improving the customer experience while making things easier for you and your staff.

When customers know the reasons behind certain requests, for example removing lids to avoid bale explosions, they're more inclined to assist staff and make the process more efficient.

Other examples of simple yet effective customer education may include:

- the requirement of bulk returns, signing a refund declaration (when returning more than 1,500 containers at a time),
- what containers are eligible,
- the benefits of washing and pre-sorting your containers (either into material types or into 24-pack cartons) before cashing in,
- removing lids before cashing in,
- having their member number or a charities member number at the ready,
- downloading and using the Containers for Change app (see section 7.1.1) or digital wallet (see section 7.1.2),
- the option to use an in-house bag drop instead of waiting in line,
- a polite request to not engage in conversation when a staff member is counting,
- the scheme's recycling process, or
- your quiet times of the week.

Some of these can be communicated through conversation or via signage. View section 5.2 on the operator marketing toolkit to see what of the above have been made into downloadable signs ready for you to use.

4.3 SIGNAGE TYPES AND WHERE TO PLACE THEM

Signage is a great asset when it comes to informing customers and setting expectations when customers visit your container refund point (CRP). There are several different signage types available to order from your local print shop if you would like to improve your customer experience.

Examples of informative signage include:

- **a billboard** on a main road near your site advertising your business and the 10 cent refund you're offering,
- **A-frame** or sandwich board at a pop-up CRP with operating hours,
- **corflutes** with eligible and ineligible containers, or
- **A3 posters** educating customers (see sections 3.1 and 4.2.1).

When ordering signs, consideration should be given to what you wish to advise your customer, how will this information benefit their customer experience and how will the information create efficiencies in your business.

Best practice sites also have important signage in languages other than English.

When considering signage for your site, please consult the operator marketing toolkit (see section 5.2) for ideas and ready-to-print approved artwork.

4.4 SIGNAGE AVAILABLE FROM CONTAINER EXCHANGE (COEX)

Containers for Change branded signage is available in a range of colours and sizes as detailed below. Each depot is allocated one sign free of charge. The decision on which sign you receive will depend on the size and position of your site and is a collaborative decision between you and your Network Lead.

The operator marketing toolkit has a number of other signs which operators should take advantage of. More on this can be found in section 5.2.

5.0 MARKETING

Container Exchange (COEX) runs a range of marketing campaigns to promote the scheme overall and encourage Queensland residents and businesses to participate for the good of the environment and their hip pocket.

Operators are encouraged to develop local campaigns to promote their site to current and potential customers, using local media, social media, marketing materials, signage, event attendance and support of community groups as just some of the avenues.

The Containers for Change brand guidelines should be referenced when developing any marketing materials; this can be found in Brand Hub. Operators should also keep their Network Leads informed of marketing activity they have planned to ensure the activity is appropriate for the time and platform, and all operators should email marketing@containerexchange.com.au for approval of any materials with the Containers for Change brand.

5.1 BRANDING

The Containers for Change brand is an invaluable asset to your business. The brand shapes how customers understand and perceive your business by associating with the recognisable and trusted brand. With over 90% of Queenslanders aware of the scheme*, it's essential you take advantage of this by displaying the Containers for Change brand at your site.

You must abide closely to the Containers for Change brand guidelines (which can be found in Brand Hub) to be able to use the brand to tap into these aware customers and positioning your business as an authorised container refund point (CRP).

A brand is not only visual, the delivery of customer experience through helpful signage and displaying Containers for Change's values through customer service also plays a large role. Poor delivery of the brand can instantly change a customer's perception of your business and reduce the likelihood of them coming back.

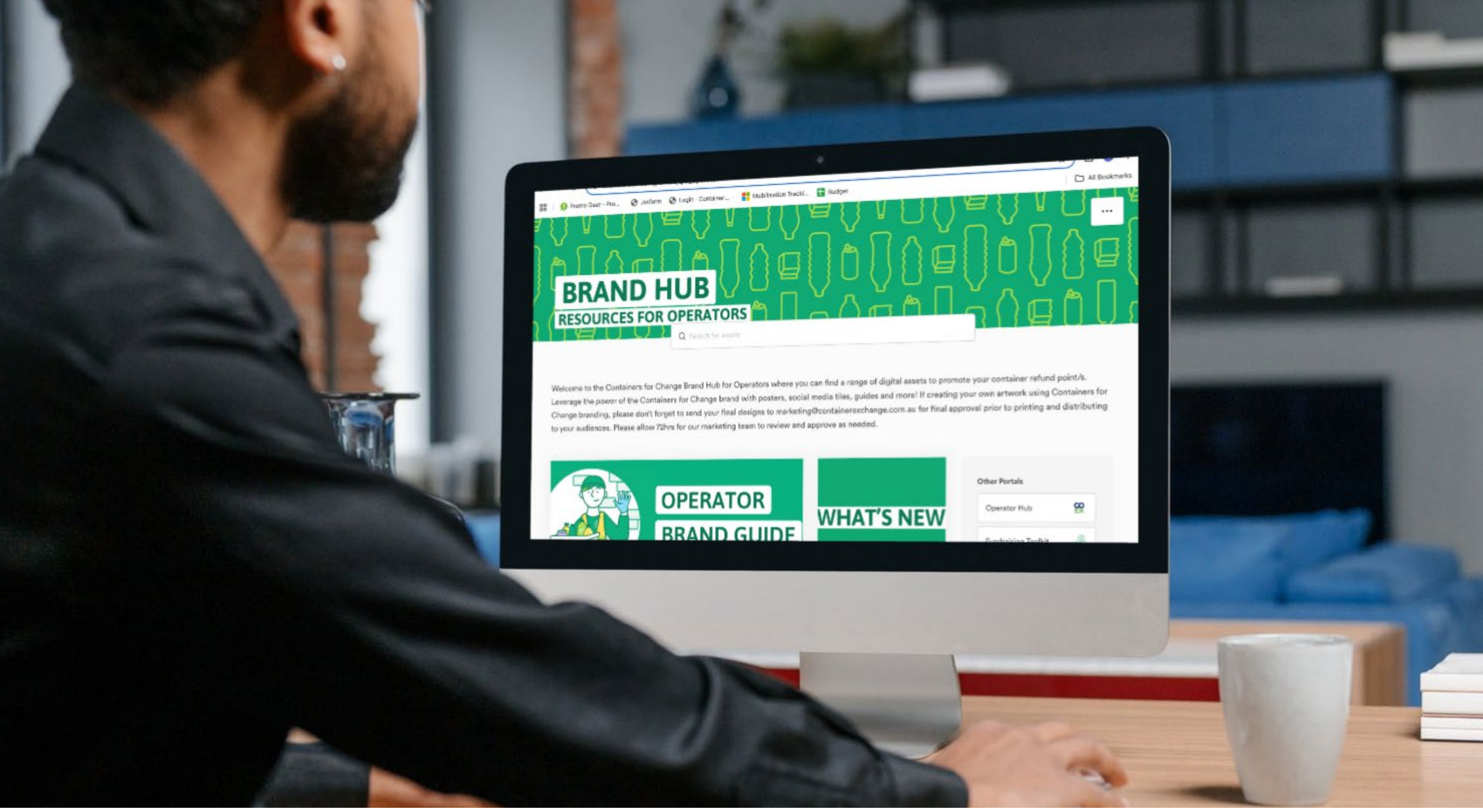
In the brand guidelines you'll find guidance on how to use the Containers for Change logos, colour palette and tone of voice.

All customer touch points, including the Containers for Change website and app, and CRPs, must uphold and reinforce the positive perception of the brand and follow these guidelines.

While it's in your best interest to use the brand, operators are required to adhere to the Media and Branding Policy as well as the requirements regarding branding in your Container Collection Agreement (CCA). The Media and Branding Policy should be read in full to ensure you're abiding by all the elements of the policy, including proactive media opportunities with media outlets. With regard to branding, the CCA states that the operator must display signs and branding or marketing materials when requested by the Product Responsibility Organisation (PRO).

The Media and Branding Policy can be found in Brand Hub and further information or additional clarification on the application and use of the brand can be sourced by emailing marketing@containerexchange.com.au.

*Veracity survey. (January, 2025).



5.2 OPERATOR AND COMMUNITY GROUP MARKETING TOOLKITS

To help you provide the optimal customer experience, we have developed an operator marketing toolkit specifically for your business known as Brand Hub.

Brand Hub is full of print-ready signage and promotional assets that you can co-brand and personalise for your container refund point (CRP). Should you wish to co-brand the Containers for Change brand artwork, you must adhere to the partner logo guidelines outlined in the toolkit (see section 5.1 for more information on branding).

Brand Hub can be viewed here.

When using the toolkit, you must abide by the following:

- please read the style guidelines and toolkit document in full, and
- if you make changes to any of the artwork in Brand Hub after downloading, it must be submitted for approval to marketing@containerexchange.com.au.

We have developed a similar marketing toolkit for community groups participating in the scheme to use to maximise their container refunds. This can be found here and can be shared with any groups you partner with (see section 10.0 for more information).

5.3 MERCHANDISE AVAILABLE

There is a range of branded merchandise available to purchase from Container Exchange (COEX).

This may include:

- marquee kits, which includes one 3m x 3m marquee, two pull-up banners and a double-sided A-frame,
- stubby coolers; or
- bags.

Please keep in mind that stocks are limited and are subject to change.

For more details about merchandise, please email your Network Lead.

5.4 MARKETING SUPPORT AVAILABLE

There are a number of ways Container Exchange (COEX) supports container refund point (CRP) operators with free marketing services.

Electronic direct mail (EDM)

To promote the scheme, COEX sends an eDM to customers with a member number in the area to advise that a CRP:

- has joined the network,
- is relocating sites,
- is converting from a bag drop or pop-up to a depot, or
- is closing permanently or temporarily.

It's important your Network Lead is notified of any changes fourteen business days before it takes place. This will ensure they have time to approve the change and that the change is made on the website and the EDM is scheduled all before the chaege goes live. This allows COEX to provide sufficient notice to customers.

Failure to give sufficient notice to customers, may result in complaints and negative impact on your business's reputation.

You should also support this eDM with your own promotion. You can read more on this in section 3.9.

Media or social media

CRPs that pass on good news stories about their site, business, staff or customers may see this story become a social media post, a case study in the COEX Annual Report or sent to COEX's government stakeholder for their use, a story posted on the Containers for Change website, or a media article.

Particularly, for social posts, the good news story needs to be accompanied by a high-quality photo. Make sure you have written permission of anyone photographed. See the Operator Hub for a suggested photo release form.

If you do have a good news story, please email it and a photo to your Network Lead. Please keep in mind that, unless the story is time sensitive, it may not be posted or shared right away.

Google My Business (GMB)

GMB is a great place to focus your early online marketing efforts. After all, when people search for a CRP near them, they're usually very ready to make a container return. It's important the information about your business that shows up when people search Google is as accurate, complete and optimised.

GMB is a free tool that can help you drive customer engagement with local customers across Google Search and Maps. You can add your business name, location and hours, monitor and reply to customer reviews and questions, add photos, learn where and how people search for you, and more.

Marketing advice

If you're creating your own marketing materials or would like advice on the application of the Containers for Change brand, operators can email marketing@containerexchange.com.au for complimentary assistance.

6.0 MANAGING CONTAINERS

Confirming that the containers your customers are returning are eligible and paying them the correct refund is every operator's bread and butter. Doing this accurately will improve your site's profitability and provide a good customer experience, helping to ensure the sustainability of your business.

In this section we'll cover container eligibility, counting methods and processes, dealing with disputes and sorting containers into material types.

6.1 ELIGIBLE AND INELIGIBLE CONTAINERS

It's imperative you and your staff have a great understanding of what containers are eligible and ineligible.

An easy way to think about eligibility is to remember that eligible items are generally beverage containers consumed away from the home (e.g. water, soft drinks, small flavoured milk). Ineligible items are those that are generally consumed at home (e.g. cordial and plain milk bottles).

Broader definitions can be found below and examples in Table 1 Eligible and ineligible materials.

Eligible containers

Most aluminium, glass, plastic, steel and liquid paperboard beverage containers between 150ml and 3L are eligible for a refund. To be eligible, the beverage container must:

1. Have contained a beverage product that is included in the Queensland scheme

For example, cordials and plain milk are not included in the scheme, so containers that have held these products are not eligible for a refund.

2. Display the refund mark

This is so customers and container refund point (CRP) staff can see if the container is a part of the scheme. The approved Queensland refund mark is:

10c refund at collection depots/points in participating State/Territory of purchase.

Following the expansion of the scheme to include wine and spirits, beverage manufacturers were given a three-year grace period (until 1 January 2027) to display a refund mark.

3. Be an approved container

Some containers are made from materials that cannot be recycled or are not approved by the Queensland Government as an eligible container. The Queensland Government's list of approved and not approved containers can be found here.

Ineligible containers

There are some beverage containers that are not eligible for a refund. Generally, excluded containers are those that are less than 150ml and greater than 3L.

Other ineligible containers include:

- any plain milk containers,
- containers 1L or more which have contained flavoured milk, pure fruit or vegetable juice, cask wine or cask water,
- cordial or syrup containers,
- sachets above 250ml which have contained wine, and
- registered health tonics.

Many ineligible containers can still be recycled through existing council kerbside collection (if available) or drop-off services. Counters should politely explain this to customers who return ineligible containers.

Yakult

Containers less than 150ml are not eligible and cannot be redeemed by customers or operators. Given Yakult containers are smaller than 150ml, they're **not** an eligible container in the Queensland scheme. While Yakult containers are eligible in other jurisdictions and have a refund mark, this does **not** mean they're accepted in the Queensland scheme.

For more information on eligible and ineligible containers, see section 6.1.1 on recognising ineligible containers and non-containers and section 6.1.2 and on how to double check the eligibility of a container.

Figure 1 – Eligible and ineligible materials

ARE YOUR CONTAINERS ELIGIBLE?

CONTAINERS FOR CHANGE

Scan to learn more

Eligible

Most aluminium, glass, plastic, steel and liquid paperboard drink containers between 150ml and 3L.

- Soft drink and beer cans
- Plastic drink bottles
- Glass drink bottles
- Juice poppers
- Small flavoured milk cartons and poppers
- Wine and spirit bottles

Ineligible

Some beverage containers aren't accepted, but most of these items can still go into your kerbside recycling bin.

- Plain and alternative milk cartons and bottles
- Large juice boxes and cordial bottles
- Cask wine
- Coffee cups

6.1.1 RECOGNISING INELIGIBLES AND NON-CONTAINERS

As you're aware, operators can only be paid a handling fee and reimbursed for cash payments made on eligible containers. As a result, it's in your best interest to confirm the container's eligibility before accepting it from the customer. By accepting and processing ineligible containers, you may be in breach of the legislation and your contract. If you have reason to believe a container is not eligible, you have the right to refuse the container.

Any person counting or sorting containers at your container refund point (CRP) should read the Container Exchange (COEX) practice statement on Ineligible Containers and Compressed Blocks (1/2019) (download the statement from the Operator Hub) and consider the following to protect yourself, your staff and your business.

Recognising non-containers

According to the relevant Queensland legislation, the formal definition of a container eligible for a refund is an empty container that has previously been filled with liquid for human consumption. Common ineligible containers that do not fit this definition are below and should not be accepted.

Any containers displaying the below characteristics should not be accepted and the attempted return should be reported to your Network Lead. Your Network Lead will pass this information onto the respective area within COEX for actioning. Operators should expect to receive feedback from COEX regarding the issue raised.

Table 2 – Non-containers

Description	Example
✗ Partial containers	Examples of these containers are: • half containers, and • pieces of containers (e.g. shredded containers).  

Table 2 – Non-containers (continued)

Description	Example
✗ Pre-consumer containers	Examples of these containers are: • cans missing their top (see below for more information), • malformed or contorted polyethylene terephthalate (PET) bottles due to multiple compression points, and • PET bottles missing their lid's safety seal. 

Pre-consumer versus new style of can

You can tell these are pre-consumer containers referenced in table 2 and to the right (top image) because the whole lids of the cans are missing. This is because the container was pulled from production before the lid was added.

However, some breweries have released a new type of eligible can which look very similar to pre-consumer containers. This is because you peel the lid off to open the can. These cans are eligible and are shown to the right (bottom image). As you can see, the slight difference between the two is that the new eligible cans have a thicker ring around the top, which you can see in the photos to the right.

Keep in mind that pre-consumer containers may have branding printed on them as if they had been sold, like in the image below (left) and are typically returned in bulk quantities.

✗ **Pre-consumer - ineligible**

✓ **New style of can - eligible**

It's important you and your staff are aware of these containers and how to identify the eligible versus ineligible containers to ensure you are paying refunds correctly and to protect your business. If you're ever unsure, send a photo to your Network Lead for direction.

Container size

The below table indicates sizes of beverage containers that are ineligible under the Queensland scheme.

Table 3 – Excluded containers

Volume	Excluded
Less than 150ml	Any and all containers
Less than 250ml	Plastic or foil containers (e.g. sachets) previously filled with wine.
More than 1L	All containers filled with: • flavoured milk, • fruit or vegetable juice (at least 90%), or • cask wine or water.
More than 3L	Any and all containers.

The liquid

Containers filled with particular liquids are not eligible for a refund under the Queensland scheme. These liquids include:

- plain milk, including milk concentrate, milk powder and plant-based milk substitute (e.g. almond or soy milk),
- cordial,
- concentrated fruit or vegetable juice,
- health tonic, and
- syrup.

If the container is brought back with any unidentifiable liquid in it, please see section 3.8.3.

A registered container

Eligible containers must be registered for the Queensland scheme by the beverage manufacturer or be approved in a corresponding jurisdiction. Registered products ensure that the deposit has been paid on the container by the beverage manufacturer. You should check if the container is registered before accepting it, otherwise it's ineligible. You can find out how to check the container is registered in section 6.1.2.

The refund mark

Beverage manufacturers must include the refund mark on the eligible containers they sell – this could be printed on or with a sticker. The refund mark may refer to Queensland specifically, be generic, or reference South Australia or the Northern Territory. Any container without a refund mark is ineligible.

Note: Following the expansion of the scheme to include wine and spirits, beverage manufacturers were given a three-year grace period (until 1 January 2027) to display a refund mark.

In saying this, a container with a refund mark may also be ineligible, like Yakult bottles which are less than 150ml, which is why it's important to tick all the boxes before you accept the container as eligible.

Previously returned or processed

Containers that have had a refund amount at a CRP or recovery amount at a material recovery facility (MRF) paid on them are

not eligible for a second refund. These containers will have certain characteristics which indicate they have been previously through a CRP or MRF.

Previously processed material will be:

- baled or in a compressed block and generally not separable by hand,
- excessively flattened,
- torn or warped, or
- highly contaminated with ineligible aluminium such as pet food, tuna tins or alfoil trays.

These containers are also typically returned in bulk.

A further breakdown to recognise these containers is in the table below.

Table 4 – Fraudulent containers

Description	Example
✗ Baled	Operators are unable to count and/or assess material presented in bales, as such, cannot meet their obligations under the legislation.  

Table 4 – Fraudulent containers (continued)

Description	Example
Contaminated	Ineligible materials stuck to the container. The contamination may include: • pet food packaging, • alfoil pie dishes, or • ineligible containers   
Previously baled	Characteristics can include: • wafer thin, • PET bottle mouths bent and folded over on itself, • warped, torn or damaged, or • partial containers. These would be due to be compressed with multiple compression points.   

Any containers displaying the above characteristics should not be accepted and the attempted return should be reported to your Network Lead. Your Network Lead will pass this information onto the respective area within COEX for actioning. Operators should expect to receive feedback from COEX regarding the issue raised.

It's important to stay alert as accepting these containers may be considered as fraudulent behaviour.

Additional information can be found in the COEX practice statement on Ineligible Containers and Compressed Blocks (1/2019). You can download a copy from the Operator Hub.

Sold pre-scheme

Containers that were sold prior to the Queensland scheme's launch on 1 November 2018 are not eligible for a refund.

If you or your staff are unsure about the status of a container that is returned to you, please contact your Network Lead before accepting it. Doing so could protect your business from possible fraudulent behaviour.

6.1.2 DOUBLE CHECKING ELIGIBILITY

Operators won't be paid for ineligible containers, so it's important to check eligibility before accepting it from a customer, particularly if it's an uncommon product.

The first step should be locating the refund mark on the product, which says: 10c refund at collection depots/points in participating State/Territory of purchase.

Given this refund mark is acceptable in other states, you should double check that the container is eligible in Queensland.

You can do this through any of the following:

- enter the product's barcode into the product look-up on the website here,
- enter the product's barcode into the point of sale (POS) system (see section 11.2 on POS), or
- scan the product's barcode with the Containers for Change app (see section 7.1.1 on the app.)

If the container is ineligible, it's important to let the customer know this so they don't continue to return ineligible containers.

If a bag drop customer has returned ineligible containers, record this in POS so they can see on their transaction history that they returned ineligible containers and that's why the payment is shorter than they would be expecting.

6.2 MANUAL COUNTING METHODS

If you choose to conduct manual counts, having an efficient system which maximises counting time and the ability to achieve high counts is one of the keys to maximising profitability. Operators should think through how the counting area will be laid out, how you will record the counts and how easy and safe it is to dispose of counted containers.

The customer's role

You may want to consider encouraging your customers to pre-sort their containers into material types (e.g. glass separate) or repacked into 24-pack cartons. Best practice operators who get to know their customers might be able to identify who will benefit from this return method. Make sure to use this to your advantage; if the containers are pre-sorted into material types, keep them separate when emptying them onto the counting table.

The set-up

Generally speaking, for manual counts containers are emptied out onto counting tables. You will need to consider the height of the counting tables to ensure they're at a suitable height for counters and that the tables are big enough to hold enough volume to maximise counting. As a guide, a typical household garbage bag will hold approximately 100 aluminium cans that have not been flattened or crushed. Tables that allow you to adjust the height and have a conveyor belt are considered best practice across the network.

Containers can then be counted by either picking up the containers and throwing them into a bin or cage, or by having a hole in one end of the table with a bin placed underneath and sweeping the containers into the hole. If you're throwing them into a receptacle, it's typically workplace health and safety (WHS) best practice to place it in front of the counters so they're not twisting their back every count.

The technique

Counters will each have a counting method that works best for them. As an example, some staff grab four containers at a time, count each grab as 'one' then multiply the end count by four. Others just count as they go.

The best advice is to try different techniques and see which suits you best and which is most efficient.

Tally equipment

Consider how counters will record their counts. If filling out a pre-printed form, then calculators, pens and new forms should be within easy reach to ensure the counters are not held up.

If using a whiteboard, ensure the whiteboard is within easy reach of the counters without the board encroaching on their work area.

"Count in progress" sign

Some operators have found their counters are often distracted by customers who try to engage in conversation mid-count. Displaying a "count in progress" sign in front of the counters is a simple way to ask customers not to distract staff mid-count.

6.2.1 VERIFYING MANUAL COUNTS

Best practice operators recommend random checks to ensure staff are manually counting correctly. This can reduce complaints regarding incorrect counts and increase customer satisfaction. Random checks are particularly important for sites where staff are left to their own devices to count.

Below are a few ways you can conduct count checks.

CCTV

Operators are advised to install CCTV systems for general site security. The system should be extended to include vision of the counting tables for those depots conducting manual counting. Operators can then use the footage to verify if the count that the staff member came to matched what you counted on CCTV.

Side-by-side counts

Another method is standing next to a staff member and conducting your own count while they do the same. You can verify the count by comparing your totals at the end.

Isolating counts

You may ask your staff member to put aside the containers after they count them, so you can recount them to check the accuracy of the total.

Rule-of-thumb

Experience will assist operators in understanding what different bags and receptacles hold in the way of containers. As a rule of thumb, black garbage bags to suit 56 litre bins will typically hold around 100 aluminium cans or 80 600ml plastic bottles. If a staff member's count strays too far from this rule, operators should investigate to ensure accuracy in the future.

6.2.2 COUNTING DISPUTE PROCESS

Operators will inevitably run into disputes with customers over counts. Offering customer transparency of the count process is the best way to prevent any issues.

Below are recommendations from successful operators for different count methods:

Manual counts

For operators using manual counts, empty the bag onto the counting table and quickly sort through the eligible containers (see section 6.2 for more details on manual counting methods), making sure to put any ineligible containers to the side.

It's important to log ineligible containers in the point of sale (POS) system, especially for bag drops. Otherwise, customers may dispute the count thinking they've returned more containers when they were, in fact, ineligible. If they're able to see in their transaction history that ineligible containers were returned, this will prevent them alleging miscount.

Operators may consider counting into empty bins or cages, recording the quantity and verifying with the customer that the count is correct. Any dispute can then be resolved by emptying the bin back out onto the counting table and recounting the containers. If you have to recount, make sure you count at a slower pace and out loud so the customer can count with you.

If you're counting containers into larger bins filled with previous containers, it will be difficult to provide a manual recount.

CCTV systems are very helpful as they provide clear evidence and can be used to replay the count. Operators should consider CCTV placement so that there is a clear line of sight over the counting table.

Counting machines

Sites where customers use counting machines to return their containers means that the container refund point (CRP) operator and staff have a responsibility of managing the public as they use the machines. A staff member (see section 3.6 on front of house concierges) should always be present to supervise and ensure ineligible containers are not processed through the machine.

Some counting machines have a CCTV system whereby any disputes can be checked by reviewing footage. The operator will need to request the footage from the counting machine vendor which may take up to 24 hours to receive the footage. Make sure you let the customer know of this delay to manage their expectations.

Taking responsibility for errors

If after a recount or reviewing CCTV footage you realise you or your staff have made a mistake, ensure that you take responsibility and apologise to the customer for your mistake and the inconvenience caused. This approach is often well received and seen as an honest mistake instead of making excuses.

Alternatively if recounts or footage proves the count is correct, it's imperative you deal with the customer in a highly professional manner.

If you need advice on dealing with difficult customers in these situations, please see section 3.8.

6.3 SORTING CONTAINERS BY MATERIAL TYPE

In Queensland, operators are required to count and sort material into nine different material types such as:

1. glass,
2. aluminium,
3. clear polyethylene terephthalate (PET),
4. coloured PET,
5. high-density polyethylene (HDPE),
6. liquid paperboard,
7. steel,
8. other (e.g. juice pouches or casks), and
9. ineligibles.

While this may seem daunting at first, it does get easier as the different material types become more familiar to you and your team. Not to mention only small quantities of some of these materials will be returned.

An easy way to think about eligibility is to remember that eligible items are generally beverage containers consumed away from the home (e.g. water, soft drinks, small flavoured milk). Ineligible items are those that are generally consumed at home (e.g. cordial and plain milk bottles).

Clear PET vs coloured PET

A common question from operators is where to draw the line between clear and coloured PET. While it's easy if you're presented with a bright green container, it can be difficult separating clear containers from blue containers.

The below image shows the split as confirmed by buyers on the Containers for Change recycling panel.

How to separate clear and coloured PET containers

It's important that each depot is following the above image when sorting so that bales are as close as possible to the buyer specification. The containers to the left of the line are clear and the containers to the right are classified as blue. White and green PET are also categorised as coloured. You should print this image and have it close to the counting and sorting areas at your container refund point (CRP).

Buyers don't want bales which include a mix of coloured and clear materials. If we fail to get the split right, sales could drop, causing processors to earn less and the scheme to cost more. There won't be penalties for minor variances but in the interests of providing material the buyers want, please ensure all staff know clear PET from coloured.

If you're still unsure what section a certain container belongs to after consulting the picture, please ask your Network Lead for confirmation.

Ineligible containers

Although you're not required to handle ineligible containers, it's important you still enter these into the point of sale (POS) system. It's particularly important to do this when counting bag drop returns. If they're entered into POS, the customer will see in their transaction history that they returned ineligible containers and that's why their refund is shorter than expected. This will minimise complaints about bag drop short payments from those customers who unknowingly return ineligible containers.

Capturing ineligible containers in POS also shows Container Exchange (COEX) how many customers are returning ineligible containers, indicating what level of education we need to do to prevent these being returned to your site.

In Queensland, operators are required to count and sort material into nine different types.

6.4 HANDLING BULK RETURNS

Bulk returns are an opportunity for customers to drop off containers and allow you to process them during quiet times of the day. This can be attractive as it means the customer doesn't have to wait in the queue to be served or their containers to be counted. This supports your business in maximising container collection growth and income generation potential. Be mindful that not all customers will want to drop off and leave and may want to wait whilst their containers are counted. A key point here is that you need to be flexible and responsive to your customers' needs.

Either way, successful operators have the capability to receive bulk container quantities from their customers.

Please remember that operators have obligations under Queensland legislation in regard to bulk volumes. If a customer is returning 1,500 containers or more at a time you must enter the licence number into the point of sale (POS) system, get a copy of their licence and store the copy for five years. You are also required to have them sign a refund declaration form or have a bulk claim arrangement (see section 9.2 on commercial contracts). The declaration must be saved, stored and presented to Container Exchange (COEX) with your weekly claims or when requested.

To ensure your business and staff are protected when accepting bulk returns, you and your staff should read the COEX practice statement on Ineligible Containers and Compressed Blocks (1/2019). You can download a copy from the Operator Hub.

6.5 LOGISTICS PROVIDERS

As an operator, you're in charge of the containers once they're collected, making sure they're in good condition until they're picked up by the logistics providers. You also handle getting everything ready for pickup by the logistics team chosen by COEX.

You'll work closely with COEX's appointed logistics providers to ensure the smooth movement of eligible containers from the collection points (CRPs) to the processing providers.

What you need to do

- Store the sorted containers by material type in the Collection Infrastructure (which is provided by the Equipment Provider) and keep them in a secure area until COEX's logistics provider is scheduled to pick them up. The holding area needs to be big enough to handle the volume of containers, and you should consider how often the logistics providers will be picking them up in your traffic management plan.
- Let COEX and the logistics provider know when the holding area is full and ready for collection.
- Make sure the logistics provider has easy access to the CRP when they come for the pickup.
- Generate a shipping manifest through the IT platform for each collection, which will be shared with both the logistics provider and the processing provider.

Keep in mind, COEX covers the logistics costs.

7.0 CUSTOMER PAYMENT OPTIONS

The Containers for Change scheme offers refund payments to customers via member number (electronic funds transfer (EFT) or PayPal) or cash. The Containers for Change app and digital wallet are also available to customers as an easy way to cash in with their member number.

Depending on your business model you may wish to offer one or both payment options to customers. This section details the pros and cons of each method as well as outlining any IT or equipment required for processing or tracking payments. It also covers important information around cash handling processes to protect you and your staff.

7.1 MEMBER NUMBER

Member numbers are a unique nine-digit code that customers receive when they create a Containers for Change account. Customers can use this ID at any container refund point (CRP) across the state to receive their refund via electronic funds transfer (EFT) into their nominated bank account or via PayPal.

Paying a refund via a member number is a win-win for customers and operators. For operators, member numbers reduce cash handling costs and efforts and eliminate the need for cash limits, which can result in complaints. For customers, their money is deposited straight into their nominated bank account and they're able to keep track of their return history.

Because member number refunds create this electronic record for the customer, it makes it easier for both parties during payment investigations since there's a record of the time and date of the customer's visit and the number of containers per material type counted. Another reason why it's important to log any ineligible items customers return into the point of sale (POS) system.

Customers may present their member number in a number of ways, this includes:

1. the Containers for Change app (see section 7.1.1),
2. their digital wallet on their smartphone (see section 7.1.2), or
3. verbally, such as they've saved their ID in the note section of their phone or have memorised the code.

The fastest way for payment for both customers and operators is for operators to scan the customer's member number barcode from the app or digital wallet using a barcode scanner. You can read more about the best scanners for CRPs in section 11.4.

If you don't have a scanner, you will need to type their member number into POS. It's important you verify with the customer the member number you've entered and the name that is attached to that account. It's an administrative burden to you and your team, the customer and Container Exchange (COEX) if the member number you enter isn't correct.

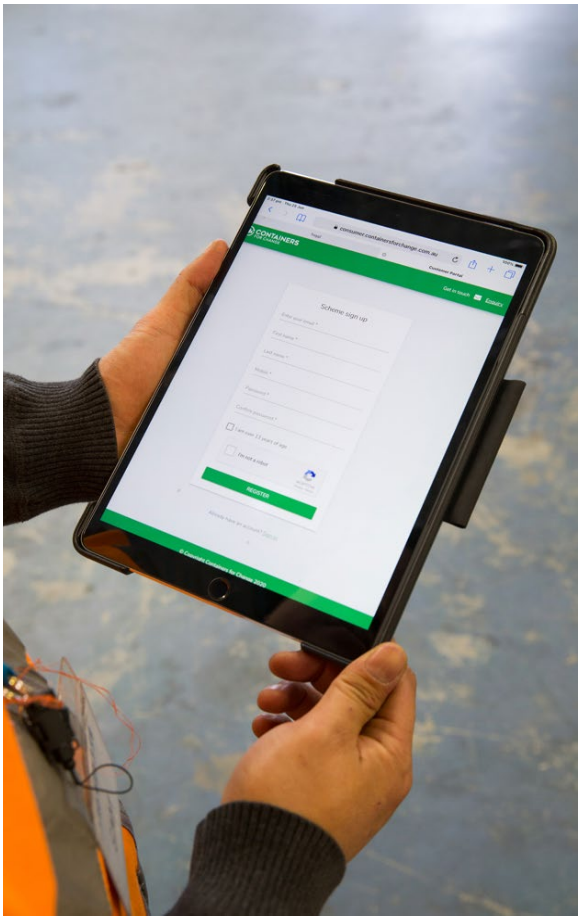
Member numbers also offer a contactless way of cashing in if used at a bag drop or at a drive-through depot where you collect the customer's containers from their car.

Real-time payments means that once you have processed a customer's containers under their member number, they'll receive their refund in their bank or PayPal account almost immediately.

Paying a refund via a member number is a win-win for customers and operators.

How to sign up

1. Visit www.containersforchange.com.au and hit the sign up button (bottom of navigation panel) to register your details.
2. Visit the activation link sent to your email address to complete the registration.
3. Start cashing in! Save your member number to your smartphone via its digital wallet or the Containers for Change QLD app.



How to choose your preferred payment method

For new accounts

After signing up, you'll receive an activation link directing you to complete the registration. When entering your bank details during this step, you can select whether you would like to direct your refund to your bank or PayPal account. You can also sign up to PayPal during the registration if you don't already have an account.

For existing accounts

Log in to your account at www.containersforchange.com.au. Visit the 'Financial Information' tab and select your preferred payment method. Here you can also sign up to PayPal if you don't already have an account.

7.1.1 CONTAINERS FOR CHANGE APP

The Containers for Change app makes recycling easier for Queenslanders. It's a handy companion to help customers return and recycle their eligible containers in Queensland.

The app is available for download on the Apple store here or on the Google Play store here.

Below are the key features of the current app.

Container eligibility scanner

Users of the app can use the barcode scanner to check whether a container is eligible for a 10 cent refund under the Queensland scheme.

Not only is this a great tool for your customers, providing an easy way to tell what's eligible before cashing in, but can also be valuable for your team when they come across uncommon containers and aren't sure if they're eligible or not.

Return history

Customers can keep track of their recycling progress with updates on their returned containers and total refunds made via their member number. Customers can also keep up to date with how Queensland is doing overall.

Book Container Collect

Customers can book a free home collection via the app. The service increases accessibility for people who would otherwise not be able to participate.

Easy access to member number

The app is an easy way for customers to find their member number, as well as a barcode and QR code version of their member number. This can be scanned to complete a transaction at those container refund points (CRPs) that have a barcode scanner.

With a barcode scanner, scanning the customer's member number barcode on the app will be the easiest and quickest way to complete the transaction not only for the customer, but also for staff. Just scan the barcode and you're both done! To learn more about what scanners Container Exchange (COEX) recommends, see section 11.4.

Find out where to cash in

Users can search for their nearest CRP and see what type of service they provide. All CRPs in Queensland are listed and include their address, opening hours, payment method/s and contact details.

Recyculator

Recyculator is an interactive educational tool that demonstrates the value of containers based on the customer's weekly beverage consumption, calculating how much money the customer could make if they cashed in those containers. It also demonstrates what products the materials can be recycled into.

7.1.2 DIGITAL WALLET

Customers can add their member number to their Apple Wallet (iPhone users) or WalletPasses (android users) app on their smartphones. As well as the member number, the pass also includes a barcode that can be scanned at the container refund point (CRP).

This provides an easier payment process for staff and customers with:

- no manual entry of the nine-digit code into the point of sale (POS) system required – reducing the chance of human error,
- no opportunity for the member number to be miscommunicated between the customer and staff member, and
- this being the quickest payment option for both parties – just scan the barcode and payment is complete for the customer and operator.

You can read more on what scanners are recommended for operators in section 11.4.

Staff should be letting customers know that the digital wallet can be downloaded on the Containers for Change website, specifically here.

7.2 CASH

Containers for Change offers a 10 cent refund for customers returning each eligible container to an authorised container refund point (CRP). Many customers choose cash as their preferred refund method, however, there are a number of key reasons to encourage using a member number instead.

Some of the reasons include the cost to your business in handling cash, such as armoured truck deliveries and theft. Encouraging customers with larger volumes to use a bag drop and refund via a member number also allows your business to take advantage of off-peak times, by counting the bag drop returns then, and reduces queues and wait time for customers.

For those operators who do offer cash, here is the advice from some successful operators on how best to manage cash refunds.

Manual payment systems

To make refund amount payments to the customer, the operator must enter the quantity of containers into the point of sale (POS) system. The system will print a receipt for you to hand to the customer. Please ensure you check the details before handing it to the customer.

For transparency, it's best to count out the cash refund in front of the customer and get the customer to acknowledge receiving the correct total. This will save you from potential disagreements developing over cash payments.

It's recommended that operators print a copy of the transaction receipt or tax invoice from the POS for all transactions and keep it for their business records as a backup system in the unlikely event that the POS system goes offline.

Cash Redemption Terminal (CRT) payment systems

The CRT has similar functionality as a typical bank automated teller machine (ATM).

Once the customer finishes their transaction, the machine will produce a ticket with a unique QR code. The customer will scan the QR code at the CRT and once registered, the screen will present the customer with a choice of either cash or member number payment. For customers selecting the cash option the CRT will dispense the appropriate amount of cash.

However, there may be issues with the CRT, such as not enough cash in the machine, so the machine will print a separate ticket for short payment as well as an alert message on the main screen. To avoid this, make sure staff regularly check and fill the machine with cash and are available for help if this happens to a customer.

7.2.1 CASH HANDLING

It's crucial for operators to protect their businesses by running a tight cash management process. The cash management process involves a number of moving parts, each of which is important to your overall success.

Organisation is crucial in your cash management. You should always be aware of the location of your cash and have accurate records available. You have the ability to prevent losses and avoid some of the common cash handling problems if you stay on top of your cash processing and keep a close watch of your cash as it moves through your business.

Security

The crime prevention methods the Queensland Police Service suggest to those businesses who offer cash include:

- frequently empty cash from your building, although not at the same time each day,
- ensure your safe is high quality if storing cash on site,
- ensure your CCTV system is targeted to entry and exit points at normal head height,
- report any suspicious behaviour as soon as possible,
- have bright lighting within and around your premises, and
- ensure your alarm systems are fully operational and that you treat all alarms seriously.

Even small amounts of cash and cash register drawers should be secured and under lock and key. Safes ideally should also be secured to the floor and be fire rated in case of a fire.

At pop-up container refund points (CRPs) it's recommended that a sturdy cash box is used and secured inside a locked vehicle when not being used.

Get automated

Particularly those sites with high daily volumes, making use of automated cash management technology will ease the process. It allows you to handle cash with ease and confidence and can provide your business with long-term savings by reducing labour costs and potential losses from theft and fraud. The machines will also properly process transactions and generate accurate reports to keep you fully informed. The machines do come at a cost, so operators need to consider the amount of cash they pay out each day to justify using automated cash machines.

Be consistent with cash handling policies

Make sure your employees receive proper training so they're comfortable and confident working within the boundaries of your policies. It helps to check in with your staff on a regular basis to correct potential issues immediately.

Keep less cash on site

Keeping large amounts of cash on site increases the potential for theft or robbery. Set a limit on the amount of cash you keep on site and promote this to the public via signage to avoid theft (see section 8.8 for more on this. Keep in mind, this may mean more regular trips to the bank to withdraw cash so you should push your customers towards member numbers to minimise the need for cash (see section 7.1).

Stay on schedule

Handling cash works best when there's a schedule involved. Maintaining a schedule will keep you organised so you don't get bogged down with cash shortages.

Ask for help

Consulting a cash management solutions provider is a great way to get answers to any of your questions on handling cash. Providers such as Armaguard or Prosegur are experts in the field and can provide you with support.

On-site tech support for your automated cash management technology is available via counting machine vendors for businesses that use a Cash Redemption Terminal (CRT).

Have enough staff

It takes manpower to monitor your security and implement cash management best practices. You should only involve trusted staff and have back up staff for critical cash handling tasks should a staff member be absent due to holidays or illness.

Emergency response procedure

Ensure that your CRP has an emergency response procedure in the unlikely event of a hold up and robbery. Your team should know what is

7.3 DONATIONS

A customer may wish to donate their containers to a registered community group, charity, school or club. To do this, a customer may give you the member number of a group registered with Containers for Change so their refund amount can be transferred into the group's bank account. To process this transaction, enter the community groups member number into the point of sale (POS) system like you would with a regular customer's member number.

The list of registered charities and their member numbers can be found on the Containers for Change charity look-up.

Operators can support these groups and encourage donations by promoting local community groups in your depot. One way successful operators choose to do this is by setting up a standing iPad or tablet at your site that displays the charity look-up. This could be positioned next to the payment counter or in a spot where customers can browse the iPad while they wait for service.

Alternatively, a monitor can be displayed at the site, profiling the member number of selected charities you may choose to nominate. You may wish to display local charities, groups you have partnered with, or change the displayed charities every week or two. Although customers cannot search the look-up on the TV, instructions on how to find the list may also be displayed.

8.0 SITE OPTIMISATION

Developing strategies and processes to optimise the operational flow of your site will help improve customer experience, safety and productivity. Doing this will also mean an increase in profits for your business.

In this section we'll cover key areas for operators to focus on to ensure they're managing their site to achieve the best outcomes for their customers, their staff and their business.

8.1 SAFETY

Best practice safety requires a commitment from management to continually improve site safety. Operators should never underestimate the importance of safety and the role they play in its effectiveness.

Each operator has contractual and legal obligations relating to safety, this includes workplace health, safety and environment (WHSE) reporting. Operators must submit the monthly WHSE report form by the fifth working day of the following month. For guidance on WHSE reporting and notifiable incidents, visit the Operator Hub.

The key ways operators may demonstrate safety best practice are below.

Systems and process

- Ensure compliance with health and safety regulations and legislation and make sure you understand your legal obligations.
- Safety management systems – documented systems that describe how you will manage safety on your site – should be utilised.
- Hazard and risk management is a fundamental requirement in eliminating or minimising risk.
- Well documented safety reporting will allow staff to inform management of safety related issues on site.
- Instruction and training for staff is imperative as they must be made aware of safety requirements and their tasks, and be competent to undertake those tasks.
- Management must be in continual dialogue with staff and consult with them on safety issues as they affect them.
- Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) is to be provided where the risk cannot be eliminated and is required to minimise risk to health and safety.
- Continual inspection and maintenance of the site.

- Emergency response plans available to outline how the site will prepare and respond to emergency situations. This should include an emergency contact list.
- Traffic management plans which outlines vehicle and pedestrian risks, controls, flows and separation. Read section 8.3 for more on this.

The site

- Vehicular management – complete separation of customer and logistics/operational vehicle movements, clockwise traffic flow with designated entry exit. (see section 8.3).
- Pedestrian management – complete separation of customer pedestrian movement from logistics/operational vehicle movements, separate customer pedestrian areas preventing access to all operational areas of site.
- Barricading – separation of pedestrians and vehicular traffic, bollards and traffic barricades.
- Signage – such as assembly areas, speed limits, exits and fire equipment, as well as customer signage outlining potential hazards and rules to follow while on site, and staff and contractor signage such as PPE, hazards and warnings.
- Housekeeping – see section 8.11 for more on this.
- Adequate storage area for peak periods not limiting the operational capacity of the site.
- Plant and equipment – free from hazards, stored appropriately and maintained correctly.
- Automation – e.g. counting machines linked to conveyors, emptying big loads of containers into another receptacle by forklift.
- Manual handling – sorting bins close to the sorting table, and limit carrying and double handling. Mechanical lifting aids such as customer trolleys, bin lifters, forklifts, electric pallet jacks and conveyors should be utilised.
- Adequate surfaces – all surface areas free from trip hazards.
- Emergency response equipment – adequate for the site and tested and maintained.

It's important to keep an eye out for any safety alerts and updates sent to you by Container Exchange (COEX). These may require you to make adaptations to your site to ensure the safety of your staff and customers.

8.2 SITE LAYOUT

The main considerations when choosing a suitable depot site include:

- the available parking area for cars,
- pedestrian access from the car park to the building,
- truck access for the removing of containers received by the depot,
- placement of counting infrastructure whether that be counting machines or counting tables,
- storage area for logistics bins and cages and their security, and
- walkways for customers and adequate waiting areas.

Prominent line markings should be used to indicate direction of travel, pedestrian walkways and use of bollards and chain to section off areas will all assist in free-flowing vehicle and foot traffic. Clear signage will also help customers find their way (see section 4.1 on wayfinding).

Ideal sites have a drive-through capability with designated car parks under cover and clear areas for customers to move to the counting area.

It's important you work closely with the Container Exchange (COEX) Business Development team to ensure the site you're looking at is suitable and incorporates the above. You can email them at tenders@containerexchange.com.au.

8.3 TRAFFIC MANAGEMENT

Successful operators have proactive plans to manage vehicle and pedestrian flows and behaviour on site to ensure their site runs smoothly and safely for customers and staff. Vehicle and Pedestrian Traffic Management Plans need to be developed and communicated to ensure customer, operational, logistics and visitor traffic flows efficiently and without incident.

At the very least, the plan must include:

- vehicle and pedestrian entries and exits,
- vehicle and pedestrian directional flows,
- physical hard barriers (traffic guardrails, bollards, barriers and pedestrian railing, and fences),
- separation controls (mirrors, proximity alarms and line markings),
- operational areas including placement of counting tables, counting machines and reverse vending machines (RVMs),
- customer and visitor areas,
- 'no go' zones,
- pedestrian walkways,
- parking areas,
- forklift access,
- logistics access, and
- speed limits.

When making decisions on the traffic management at your site, it's important you devise a Vehicle and Pedestrian Traffic Management Plan that ensures that:

- vehicles and people do not come into contact,
- children and animals remain in vehicles at all times,
- congestion and incidents are minimised,
- a consistent, efficient and repetitive vehicle and pedestrian flow on site can be maintained,
- customers are required to park at an identified location which minimises hauling distances and time taken to return containers,
- visitor vehicles park away from customer return areas reducing congestion,
- logistics vehicles operate away from customer return areas, and
- customer returns are not disrupted when logistics vehicles need to come onsite.

Best practice traffic management may be demonstrated by the below:

Vehicular management

- Complete separation of customer vehicle movements and visitor/logistics/operational vehicle movements ensuring the customer can return containers in the most efficient timeframe.
- Clockwise traffic flow for vehicle movements to ensure one directional traffic and less congestion, or one-way vehicle movement where the customer drives straight in and out of the site.
- Separate designated entry and exits for vehicular traffic ensuring less congestion.
- Having enough customer space to ensure vehicles do not encroach onto public roads whilst waiting their turn.
- Having a traffic warden role. instructing the vehicle movements.

Pedestrian management

- Complete separation of pedestrian movements and vehicle movements ensuring the customer does not interrupt the vehicle flow.
- Demarcated pedestrian access (e.g. zebra crossings, no access areas, waiting areas and payment areas).
- Having a front of house concierge role instructing pedestrians and assisting customer service (see section 3.6).
- Having customers remain in their vehicles whilst the count takes place.

Barricading

- Physical separation of pedestrians and vehicular traffic via traffic barricades or boom gates is very effective.

Signage

- Clear signage to identify speed limits, directional flows, parking and drop-off areas, logistics areas, customer waiting and payment areas, and customer instructions.

Logistics

- Consider where the logistics vehicles need entry. They should be able to enter, collect and leave without distributing customers whether that be pedestrians or drivers. If not possible, have a strict plan for when logistic providers do attend site and ensure staff are well aware of this.
- If customers are required to move out of the queue, ensure the plan covers how staff get the customers back into the original queue order to avoid arguments between customers.

Where it’s not reasonably practicable to eliminate or substitute vehicle and mobile plant movements while in the vicinity of pedestrians (staff, customers and visitors), controls such as hard barriers should be used to separate traffic and pedestrians.

8.4 PARKING

Limited or inconvenient parking is often a key challenge for many customers. While sites may naturally have parking limitations, it's something operators of new sites should consider before committing to the location.

Below are the considerations for container refund point (CRP) parking from successful operators.

- There are minimum car park dimension requirements set out under Australian Standards AS2890.1 which are currently 4.8m by 2.4m.
- Operators who are purpose-building their site may choose to seek professional advice on car parking layouts.
- Often councils will lay out specific requirements and conditions as a part of issuing approval for sites, such as minimum requirements of the number of car parks onsite and on the street, and disabled parking. Please check with your local council for more details.
- You should consider how many vehicles can be accommodated on site and whether there's suitable available street parking.
- In designing onsite car parks, ensure there are clearly marked walkways and signage to manage the interaction between cars, equipment, and pedestrians.
- Consider parking in your Traffic Management Plan which is required for each site. See section 8.3 on traffic management for more on this.
- Most members of the public have little or no experience in dealing with the forklifts or large heavy vehicles that will be onsite during trading hours. It's your legal responsibility to keep members of the public out of harm's way and well thought out car park plans will assist you in achieving this.
- During the first weeks of opening a new site a staff member may have to be on hand in the car park to assist customers until they become familiar with the site operations.
- Operators need to be aware of their obligations in regards to disabled parking under Australian Standards AS2890.6-2009.

8.5 DISABILITY REQUIREMENTS

Businesses have an obligation to abide by legislation under the Disability Discrimination Act 1992.

Australian Standards AS1428 sets out the requirements for disabled access to sites. As a general rule of thumb, you need to ensure that a disabled person can access any area an able-bodied person can access. For example, if the entry to the building is via steps, then an access ramp will need to be in place to allow entry for every visitor.

Compliance from a building point of view is the responsibility of the landlord, however, as the tenant, you should satisfy yourself that the building does comply. Owners will have a certificate of occupation – a document certifying the buildings compliance – which you should seek a copy of. However, if you make structural and non-structural changes internally this will require the building to be recertified by a qualified Building Certifier.

Operators should consult Australian Standards AS1428, the site's landlord and their Network Lead to ensure your obligations are met.

8.6 STORAGE AND EQUIPMENT

As part of the approval process for any new site, Container Exchange (COEX) and the logistics provider will conduct site visits to familiarise themselves and ensure the site is suitable. Logistic providers and COEX will seek to put the maximum collection infrastructure capacity on site.

In general, this will take the form of:

- hook bins for the major volume containers for aluminium cans, glass bottles and polyethylene terephthalate (PET) bottles, and
- cages or bulka bags for minor volumes such as high-density polyethylene (HDPE), liquid paperboard (LPB), steel cans and others.

Operators need to be mindful that all stock is required to be stored under cover and safely secured. It's also important to consider the area available for extra storage as your volumes increase and fluctuate during peak periods. You can read more on planning for peak times in section 8.10.

Storage for equipment such as forklifts, pallets and rubbish bins will also need to be taken into account.

If you're unsure about any of the above, don't hesitate to reach out to your Network Lead.

Top tip: Having equipment like cages on wheels is a simple yet effective change. It can prevent heavy lifting and minimise forklift use around your customers. It also means those without a forklift licence can move containers around easily.

8.7 REDUCING NOISE

The operation of a container refund point (CRP) depot will unfortunately generate noise, especially due to tasks such as tipping glass bottles into bins. If your depot is located near residential housing, there's a chance residents may complain to the local council about the noise created which may end up causing disruption to your business.

Below are the top recommendations for managing depot noise.

- The location of hook bins for glass needs to be considered carefully, as noise from emptying bottles into bins will travel if the bins are placed in areas adjacent to openings such as large windows or roller doors.
- Ideally, bins should be placed in an area with walls on three sides to prevent the noise from escaping outside.
- Covers over the receptacle or padding on the bottom can minimise the noise when tipping containers into another receptacle.
- If the business is located near residential areas you may also consider not emptying into bins first thing in the morning where possible.
- Operators should contact their local council or shire to determine the noise restraint times and any other noise requirements and make adjustments accordingly.

8.8 SITE SECURITY

Any site used for collection needs to be adequately secured. Container Exchange (COEX) has an expectation that containers are stored under cover and secured safely where they cannot be accessed by members of the public out of hours.

Below are recommended best practices in regard to site security.

- Fencing needs to be well maintained. For chain wire fences, the wire will need to be secured to poles, have no holes in the fence, barb wire in good condition and gates that are able to be locked.
- Doors and windows need to be in good condition and able to be locked.
- Depots should have an alarm system installed to deter break-ins. Most reputable security companies will assist you in designing a system for your site.
- CCTV systems are a useful deterrent and can be run in tandem with coverage of counting tables or counting machines.
- Operators need to be aware of the increased risk of cash being held on site. Operators who offer cash as a payment option should read section 7.2.1 for more information.
- Safe Work Australia has a guideline for transporting and handling cash and should be referenced to assist businesses and inform operators of their obligations.
- Reference check during the recruitment process and, for positions of higher responsibility, you may want to consider running police checks.
- You can use simple signs to deter theft. These signs may include "no cash left on premises" or "surveillance cameras in use", or just the details of your security company. Standard security signage can be purchased from a local stationery shop such as Officeworks.

Visit the Queensland Police Service site on business safety here for more information or visit the Operator Hub to download their crime prevention fact sheets and brochures.

For crime happening in progress, call 000, but for non-urgent incidents, call 131 444.

8.9 TRADING HOURS

Container Exchange (COEX) expects that depots are available to the community seven days a week. With most people busy at work Monday through Friday, the weekends will typically be the busiest time for your depot. To close during these days would mean a significant loss of volumes, particularly if your competitors are trading on weekends when you are not.

Public holidays create great container volumes and deliver the best returns across the state. While you may wish to close on the public holidays due to penalty rates being too high to be viable, depots should most definitely open on the days following a public holiday. Closing on the days after the holiday would mean a great loss of volume for your site.

Seasonal peaks are also greatest throughout summer so, if viable, you may wish to extend your hours over this time to capture as much volume as possible.

Particularly for depots, trading hours should be consistent throughout the week to avoid confusion for customers. It's expected weekend trading hours will be slightly revised to your weekly hours, like most retailers.

For new sites, operators may choose to experiment with opening and closing hours and make a judgement on the impact of the business. Using the daily and weekly reports sent from COEX or the data in your point of sale (POS) system will assist you in understanding the flow of business across your trading hours. Make sure you're working closely with your Network Lead when you're making these decisions.

If you do change trading hours at any point, you must notify your Network Lead a minimum of seven business days out from the change taking place. The Network Lead has two business days to approve this change and update the relevant COEX departments**. A change cannot come into effect without your Network Lead's approval.**

One of the top complaints across the scheme is due to operators not adhering to the hours advertised on the Containers for Change website. If you correctly notify your Network Lead, your business can avoid these sorts of complaints and therefore, avoid negative impact on your reputation and customer loyalty.

8.10 PLANNING FOR PEAK TIMES AND HIGH VOLUMES

Like most businesses, running a depot has peaks and troughs in the volume of customers and containers you will experience. Below are a few tips on managing those fluctuations.

Seasonal peaks

Container collection has seasonal variations. Aligning with beverage sales and consumption trends, you can expect to see higher volumes during the summer months, particularly during the school holidays in December and January. It's best to adjust your operational rhythm to respond to these seasonal trends so you can manage the number of customers and containers that pass through your doors.

Some operators increase their hours of operation during these seasonal highs to maximise their collection capability and profitability.

Weekly peaks

Weekends are the most convenient time for customers and is when the most volumes are returned. As with most retail services and stores, there will be a general expectation from customers that your depots are open at times that suit them.

If you don't open weekends, it's likely your volumes will be affected dramatically.

Even more so, if your competitor is offering weekend trading it's highly likely your current or prospective customers will visit your competitor at the convenient time and remain loyal to them for the accessibility.

Public holidays

Sporadic peaks throughout the year are typically due to public holidays. While you may have to close on the public holiday due to staffing rates being higher than justifiable, high volumes are always seen the days after public holidays. To close beyond the public holiday would mean a significant loss of volumes for your business.

Close to the public holidays, your Network Lead will approach you to see if you'll be altering your trading hours or closing. It's important for public holiday trading hours to be correct on the Containers for Change website to meet customer expectations.

Storage and logistics

Particularly during seasonal peaks, you may want to consider increasing your secure storage capacity to manage the volume. You never want to refuse containers because you have nowhere to store them.

Operators will need to ensure there is a clear line of communication with their logistics provider to ensure bins and cages are removed in a timely way when volumes do spike. You cannot expect your logistics provider to be available without prior notice. In most cases a minimum of 24 hours notice is required, however during peak periods this may be longer.

You may also need to consider that normal scheduled pick-ups may not be available during weather events or road blockages. As a result, it's important that you have some storage capacity to enable the depot to continue to operate safely or otherwise, you may find yourself in a position of having to close the depot.

Reports are sent to operators daily and weekly and are also available through the point of sale (POS) system to help you with the task of monitoring your volume peaks and troughs.

To close beyond the public holiday would mean a significant loss of volumes for your business.

8.11 HOUSEKEEPING

A good housekeeping culture is essential to ensure a positive customer experience and minimise safety risks.

Below are the top housekeeping recommendations you should be following at your container refund points (CRPs).

1. Operators should develop a housekeeping plan and put a program in place so that tasks are completed on a regular basis. These tasks can be completed by any staff with free time or can be assigned to certain staff with a rotation policy.

This should include tasks like:

- sweeping of all areas,
- emptying of rubbish bins,
- collection of loose rubbish around the site,
- ensuring walkways are not blocked,
- ensuring fire hoses and extinguishers have clear access,
- ensuring exit doors and are easy to open and do not jam,
- ensuring illuminated exit signs are working,
- mopping any spills as soon as they occur and using the wet floor sign.

2. Keep your site looking and smelling as fresh as a CRP can. CRPs with a great customer experience use automatic air fresheners, keep bug spray on standby to catch those creepy crawlies that love CRPs and make sure hand sanitiser or hand washing stations are readily available for customers.

3. Counting tables, troughs, conveyors, the frame and the surrounds on counting machines should be cleaned regularly for safe and hygienic experience for staff and customers.

4. Customer and staff toilets should always be clean. Ensure waste baskets are not overflowing, soap dispensers are filled, and floor areas are clean and not slippery.

5. Site equipment should have clearly designated areas for the equipment to be stored while not in use. This should include brooms, shovels, mops, buckets, bins and general cleaning supplies. This equally applies to equipment such as forklifts, trolleys and pallet jacks.

6. On hot days try to provide shade or hats and sunscreen for outdoor working areas, industrial type fans or air conditioning for inside, particularly in buildings that may not have good ventilation, and make sure water is available.

9.0 BUSINESS GROWTH OPPORTUNITIES

Once your business is established in your community and your systems and processes are bedded down, you'll be looking at ways to grow your volume and profits.

This section details a range of opportunities that you may wish to explore including arrangements with community groups, commercial agreements, event attendance and event servicing.

9.1 OPERATOR-RUN DONATION DRIVES

If you have enough room in your depot, a donation bag drop to support a local community groups' fundraising activities can also assist with volumes at your depot.

This will work well if you choose to work with a community group that is unable to safely and securely collect containers at their own premises. Having a sign to indicate the amount of money raised and containers returned can be a good form of promotion within your depot, making a 'good news' campaign out of the partnership.

Not only is this good for your business reputation and could form a Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) activity, this is also a great way to get volumes from those customers who are motivated to return their containers for reasons other than the 10 cent refund.

However, the reward for these customers is lower than usual since they're being rewarded by the 'warm glow' instead of the monetary value, so it's important to make sure the effort required from them to 'cash in' is minimal; if it's too much effort for them, you may lose this customer segment. Dropping and going, and no waiting in line or even labelling their bags is perfect for these customers.

At the end of each day, count all the donated containers and submit to the profiled community group's member number in one transaction – big volumes, but minimal effort for the customer and your workers. You may wish to partner with a different charity each fortnight or month or have a few on rotation.

This is a great way to get volumes from those customers who are motivated to return their containers for reasons other than the 10 cent refund.

9.2 COMMERCIAL CONTRACTS

Commercial contracts or agreements with local businesses such as office buildings, pubs, clubs and restaurants are an excellent way to increase a depot's volumes.

Please remember that operators have obligations under Queensland legislation in regard to accepting bulk volumes. A signed agreement must be in place between the operator and the customer otherwise, customers must sign a refund declaration and provide their licence for copying if returning more than 1,500 containers or provide a valid licence for citing if returning more than 825 containers, each time they make a return. A signed agreement should be accompanied by a valid copy of the customers licence or passport and their current details. It's your responsibility to ensure these details are kept up to date during your agreement.

It's also your obligation to ensure the containers being returned under the agreement are in fact eligible. Ineligible containers and non-containers are often returned in bulk quantities so it's important you're familiar with section 6.1.1 of this guide which speaks about recognising ineligible and fraudulent containers.

For more information on your legislative obligations when entering into commercial contracts, please refer to section 99T (4) of the Waste Reduction and Recycling Act 2011.

Sealing the deal

Successful operators tend to begin these agreements by approaching the business via email or a phone call to request a meeting. Typically, they'll follow up with a site visit if a response isn't received.

Infrastructure

Once an agreement is established, commercial customers should be supplied infrastructure including a variety of bins and signage to support their on-site collection. The infrastructure will depend on the expected volumes, the available space and the frequency of your collection service. Containers for Change branding along with what containers are eligible should be clearly visible on the infrastructure provided if it will be available for the public to use to reduce contamination.

Collection

A truck or trailer with a ramp or lift would most likely be required to transport the bins.

Counting and paying

Once the material is returned to your depot, it should be counted and the transaction completed in a timely manner as agreed with the commercial customer. To ensure you're abiding by legislation and providing the customer with a full 10 cent refund per container, ensure your service fee is shown separately on the receipt and not deducted from the container count.

Ongoing partnership

Relationship management requires regular contact with the customer to build the relationship and to understand their needs. To ensure your partnership continues with the customer, ensure you process the containers in a timely manner and are responsive to their communication and needs.

9.3 CONTAINER COLLECTION AT EVENTS

One way to boost your container count is to partner with an event. An event is an activity such as a fundraiser, a concert, a festival, a market or a conference.

There are several ways to identify local event opportunities. This could be done by contacting your local council, engaging local events through social media or by contacting event management companies directly. Once initial contact has been made with the event stakeholders, you should set up a meeting to discuss collection options and logistics.

Some things to think about when considering this opportunity are listed below:

- When meeting with an event organiser, you should get an understanding of attendee numbers, the infrastructure required and where the best place to position your bins or cages at the event is.

- You should provide lockable bins or cages, bulka bags, trailers, or bins with holes in the lid to prevent general waste being deposited into the bin. This will prevent contamination for you and your staff.

- Infrastructure needs to be clearly marked indicating which materials are to be deposited into the bins, again, to avoid contamination.

- Your brand, as well as Containers for Change branding and should be clearly visible on the infrastructure provided; the Containers for Change brand is another way to prevent contamination, with more than 90% of Queenslanders aware of the brand and what it is*.

- If the containers are being donated, it's important attendees know that any container they return will support a community group. You should consider pre-event marketing activity to promote the container collection at the event – social media can be a cost-effective option for this. PA announcements, signs around the event and clear labels on the bins can help increase donations.

- Volunteers from the event or from the community group the containers are being donated to (if this is the case) can also help with collection by collecting containers from attendees as they consume beverages.

- Logistics to pick up the containers collected needs to adhere to the event's Work Health and Safety Policy and ideally be outside of the event's trading hours to the public.

- The material should be counted and the transaction completed within the agreed time or in a timely manner.

- From the moment you make contact to the last interaction you have with the event or vendor, make sure you also manage the relationship with the vendor well. Keeping the vendor satisfied with help form a longer partnership for event collection.

*Veractiy survey. (January 2025).

9.4 BEING PRESENT AT AN EVENT

Participating (e.g. not just collecting containers but having a presence) in community events, festivals, trade shows and exhibitions can be a great way to promote your business, connect with customers and engage with charity groups and the local community.

Event participation is a great tool for growing your profile and business as it gets your name out into the local community and residents are more likely to support organisations who are actively involved in the community. Brand recognition is the first step to brand loyalty, and brand loyalty means more containers through your doors.

Events you might consider attending include business expos, council events, festivals and shows that are recycling or environment focussed.

Below are some key things to consider when being present at an event:

Event checklist

Preparation is key when attending an event. An event checklist is designed to help you manage your participation like a pro. The items included range from essentials such as marquees and tables to lifesavers like cable ties and electrical tape.

Use the checklist on the Operator Hub as a guide and adapt it to your needs.

Event run sheet

An event run sheet helps everyone attending your event know when they're needed and what they're required to do. It's also handy to include a list of any key contacts and mobile phone numbers that may be required on the day.

An example run sheet can be found on the Operator Hub for you to download and customise.

Social media and publicity

Social media channels can be a great way to promote your involvement before, during and after an event. You could use images of you and your staff at the event, directions to your stall or booth, or images of your engagement with attendees.

If you're using pictures of individuals (including your staff) it's recommended to gain written permission from each person featured (or legal guardian in the case of children). This should be gained at the time the photo or video is taken, agreeing to use of their image for publicity purposes.

A photo release form can be found on the Operator Hub for you to download and use.

If you have a good news story from the event accompanied by a good quality image, with the appropriate permission received, please share with your Network Lead. This will allow Container Exchange (COEX) to also share the photo and the story in various media channels.

Branded merchandise and kits

COEX has a limited number of merchandise such as bags, t-shirts and marquee kits for sale. If you want to branded merchandise for your stall, contact your Network Lead to see what's available.

Event planning resources

COEX gratefully acknowledges the valuable resources provided by the following organisations.

Queensland Department of Premier and Cabinet (DPC)

To assist event organisers, DPC has produced Events in Queensland, best practice guidelines for event delivery in Queensland. Best practice guidelines for event delivery in Queensland outlines the guiding principles for event organisers interacting with the Queensland Government and local government authorities, to enable them to successfully plan and manage an event.

This guide and various templates are available for download here.

Tourism and Events Queensland

The Queensland Events Guide has been designed to assist local organisers throughout an entire event lifecycle, to ensure they are equipped to stage the best event possible.

The guide is available to be downloaded here.

INSURANCE

When participating at events, please also remember to speak with your insurance provider to ensure you have an appropriate level of public liability insurance cover for off-site activity. It's also a good idea to ensure the event organisers have appropriate cover.

If you're looking for information on servicing events as part of the waste collection team, visit section 9.3.

10.0 COMMUNITY GROUPS

Community groups are organisations that run charitable and community-based services on a not-for-profit basis. They provide valuable grassroots services to people where and when they need it. While some of these groups receive government funding, many of them rely on their own fundraising activities to make ends meet.

Community groups usually have a focus for their activities and support programs such as social welfare, education, health, sport, arts, safety or community improvement to name a few.

Community groups are usually run by volunteers so getting hold of them can be difficult. Many prefer to be contacted via email so they can respond to queries after hours.

Connecting with community groups is a great way to introduce your business to local residents and generate return business and container volumes. You may choose to form a close relationship with one particular group you have an affiliation with or support a number of groups from a range of focus areas. Community groups are highly motivated to promote organisations who support them so teaming up with one or many groups is a great way to generate return business and encourage positive community perceptions about your business.

We have made a fundraising toolkit available to these groups to help support their promotion of their involvement with the scheme. This can be found here.

This section will provide you with more information about this core market.

10.1 ENGAGING COMMUNITY GROUPS FOR PARTNERSHIPS

Working with community groups and charities in your local area is a smart way to build your depot's profile and container volumes. Thousands of charities and community groups have embraced the Containers for Change scheme to raise much needed funds to support their valuable programs. By harnessing the energy of motivated volunteers many of these groups are returning high volumes of containers through their partner container refund point (CRP) operators, providing benefit to both parties.

Another benefit of community groups is that the containers being returned are in bulk and can be processed during off-peak times. This not only increases your depot's profitability during off-peak times, but also leaves more capacity for containers to be returned during peak times.

Those organisations who are already participating in the scheme and have a member number can be found here. Searching online directories can also be a good way to find community groups and charities near your depot. Try visiting Pro Bono Australia or your local council website for listings of community groups and charities working near you.

School Parents and Citizens' (P&C) Associations and junior sporting clubs are great groups to work with and are easily located in most communities across the state. Depending on expected volumes, you may want to negotiate a deal with these groups to become their dedicated depot and include collection services or infrastructure like cages or bulka bags. See section 10.3 on supplying partner community groups with the appropriate infrastructure for more on this.

Make sure you help new groups get set up with a Containers for Change member number so they can track how much they've earned and you can transfer their refunds to them quickly and easily via electronic funds transfer (EFT) or PayPal.

Once you establish a relationship with a group you should promote it to your other customers via social media, front of house signage and other marketing channels. You should also ask the group to promote your support and their member number to their database of supporters, to encourage further volumes for the group and your depot.

10.2 PARTNERSHIP OPPORTUNITIES

There are several ways you can work with community groups to help them access the scheme and to secure their container volumes. However, all these avenues require the community group to set up a Containers for Change member number. After signing up on the Containers for Change website, the community group can track their returns, share their unique member number with their network and operators can easily transfer their refunds to them via electronic funds transfer (EFT) or PayPal.

Events

Community groups often hold or are beneficiaries of public events. These events offer a mutually beneficial opportunity to increase your container collection volume while also raising funds for the community group.

To read more tips on collecting containers at an event, see section 9.3.

Campaigns

Operators can also choose to support a community group by working with them over a set period of time to raise funds. This approach focuses on asking the local community to donate their container refunds to the community group rather than keeping the refund for themselves. This avenue requires the promotional support of the container refund point (CRP) operator, which may include:

- social media posts,
- reaching out to your local news outlet (e.g. radio, newspaper or television news channel), or
- posters at the CRP.

If you would like any assistance with these promotional activities, please email your draft materials to marketing@containerexchange.com.au. If the Containers for Change logo or brand appears in any of these promotional activities, you must send them to that address for approval, in accordance with the Media and Branding Policy. Approval is usually available within two business days.

Another option for a campaign may be for a depot to nominate a local community group every fortnight or month to profile and encourage donations to. You can read more about operator-run donation drives in section 10.2.

It's also important that staff are briefed on these activities so they can encourage customers to support the campaign and answer any questions about it.

Photo by Danielle Fisher, Molly and Me Photography

Donation locations

Supporting community groups to establish an area on their premises so the community can drop off their containers to donate them is another way you can support the community group and increase volumes through your depot. Community groups often have strong support networks so setting up an easy option to drop off donated containers could see big volumes for the group and your CRP.

The group may contact you directly or you may wish to find out which groups in your community are taking advantage of the scheme by chatting to your customers, following local community social media pages or searching for local charities or groups on the Containers for Change charity look-up.

Once you're in contact, you can engage with them to set up bins, cages, trailers or bulka bags so the group can pool all their donated containers. Make sure you take into account whether the receptacle will be unstaffed or left out outside of business hours and therefore, needs to be secure to prevent theft (e.g. lockable cages or trailers, or locked bins with holes cut in the lids).

Depots should also provide collection of these containers, either on a regular schedule or whenever the receptacles reach capacity.

It's important that operators provide the infrastructure, collect the containers and process the containers to the group's member number in a timely manner to ensure a good relationship with the community group and a positive brand perception for your business. A lasting partnership with a community group with a donation location would mean a steady flow of containers coming your way.

10.3 THE ARRANGEMENT AND LOGISTICS

Under your Container Collection Agreement (CCA), a container refund point (CRP) operator who collects more than five million containers per calendar year or 1,250,000 in any consecutive three month period must make container collection infrastructure available to community organisations **free of charge.**

This infrastructure may be bins, cages or trailers and must assist local community groups to take part in the Queensland container refund scheme (CRS).

By providing local community groups with infrastructure free of charge operators create a unique opportunity to, not only support a local group, but build their own brand and secure steady and regular volumes.

While some groups may be happy to cash in the containers themselves, others may want to arrange for the operator to collect their containers.

If you do charge the group a fee for the collection of their containers, it's important you're providing the customer with the full 10 cent refund per container by billing the service fee separately. The logistics should be considered a separate commercial arrangement to ensure your business is abiding with legislation.

Operators create a unique opportunity to, not only support a local group, but build their own brand and secure steady and regular volumes.

11.0 TECHNOLOGY AND PROCESSES

While there's a lot of manual handling involved in operating a container refund point (CRP), a range of technology and IT systems support and validate the day-to-day operations of your site and our overall network.

This section will speak more about those programs as well as the technologies some operators within the scheme choose to use that you may wish to adapt to increase efficiency and reduce human error at your site.

11.1 THE COEX IT PLATFORM

COEX will provide operators with the free use of the IT Platform to support the successful establishment and efficient operation of the Scheme.

Use of the IT Platform is mandatory, and allows you to:

- Create a Member Number Accounts to be used at all CRPs to facilitate the electronic payment of refund amounts to members;
- Manage all Point of Sale (POS) payments and refunds;
- Drop-off capability;
- Export data for your own operations;
- Lookup containers to check container eligibility;
- Lodge Payment Claims and reporting to COEX;
- Prepare logistics manifests for the Logistics Providers.

The IT Platform will be available during the mobilisation period so operators can get familiar with the system before starting CRP operations.

COEX will also provide mandatory training—either in person or online—for a representative from each operator. We'll also provide you with user guides to help you along the way. Any issue, please contact your Network Lead.

11.2 BUSINESS PARTNER PORTAL

Every container refund point (CRP) operator and processor will have a unique login to the Container Exchange (COEX) Portal.

You can do the following on the Portal:

- submit stock on hand and weekly claims,
- manage point of sale (POS) users and download the POS software, and
- reconcile CRP manifests (processors only).

The portal can be accessed here or by logging in to the Containers for Change website.

For a latest copy of the user manual visit the Operator Hub.

If you have any issues with the Portal, email enquiries@containerexchange.com.au or call 13 42 42.

11.3 POINT OF SALE (POS) SYSTEM

Operators are required to install the POS system onto a recommended device from the Business Partner Portal (see section 11.1). The POS system has been designed to perform numerous transactions and tasks that need to be performed as a container refund point (CRP) operator.

These functions include:

- checking container eligibility,
- validating customer member numbers,
- counting containers by material type,
- submitting transactions and bag drop counts,
- printing customer receipts, which can include a customised message,
- printing customer bag drop labels,
- generating reports on your transaction history to indicate peak and quiet times,
- managing your collection infrastructure/shipper units on site, and
- printing manifests.

POS training should be included for all staff during their induction so they're familiar with the system and can use it as required. The more familiar you and your staff are with the system, the less time that will be spent completing the tasks.

It's also recommended you have one backup POS device on standby if a POS device goes down for any reason. This way business can continue as usual if there is a technology malfunction. Additionally, operators may choose to have multiple POS devices running at once by using Coordination Services. To find out more about Coordination Services, consult the latest version of the POS training manual.

Make sure to consult the POS hardware requirements list before purchasing equipment for your site to ensure that it's compatible with POS. This list and the latest training manual can be found on the Operator Hub.

For additional training please contact your Network Lead.

If you have any issues with POS, email enquiries@containerexchange.com.au or call 13 42 42.

11.4 COUNTING MACHINES

When planning or revising your depot, you will want to consider how technology can assist you to be more efficient and create a more positive customer experience.

Reverse vending machines (RVMs)

RVMs are a self-service experience for customers to process their own containers. They can also provide out-of-hours counting facilities for your customers. See more on RVMs in section 2.3.

High-speed counting machines (singulators)

Singulators can create a faster customer experience by limiting depot waiting times and counting errors. They're also very effective for processing bag drop returns, bulk containers, and community group and commercial loads.

Any technology introduced into the scheme is subject to an accreditation process by Container Exchange (COEX). If you're thinking about introducing technology such as RVMs or singulators into your business, please contact your Network Lead before entering into a binding agreement with an equipment vendor.

11.5 REPORTING

Accurate container collection reporting is essential to the success and integrity of the scheme. To help maintain this, operators are expected to actively support COEX with audit and verification activities and follow any verification policies set by COEX.

The IT Platform will capture all the necessary data to help operators meet their reporting requirements and will also be the platform for submitting payment claims.

During routine audits, COEX's audit team will review the declared container volumes and sorting done by the CRPO to ensure everything aligns with COEX's standards, the Container Collection Agreement, and the relevant laws and regulations.

In addition to submitting regular declarations to COEX, operators are required to notify COEX as soon as possible if any of the following occurs:

- Discovery of unregistered or unapproved materials
- Any environmental, health, or safety incidents

Any false, misleading, or fraudulent claimsWe have developed guide to CCA compliance as a tool to support Operators understand their obligations under the agreement. The purpose of this document is to support Operators understand their compliance & reporting requirements in a simplified plain language way. The CCA guide is available on the operator hub.

We rely on your cooperation to keep things running smoothly and ensure the Scheme's success.

11.6 BARCODE SCANNERS

As an operator, you can use a barcode scanner to scan a customer's member number barcode on their Container for Change app (see section 7.1.1) or on their smartphone's digital wallet (see section 7.1.2).

This is the quickest and easiest payment process for customers and operators. Scanning a barcode means there's no cash handling, no time spent entering the nine-digit code manually into the point of sale (POS) system and no chance the member number is entered incorrectly.

Recommended barcode scanners for integration with your POS device include:

- Zebra DS2278 (Bluetooth or USB), and
- Honeywell Xenon 1900G SR (USB only).

A barcode scanner can save time and minimise the risk of manual entry errors when interacting with customers onsite, ultimately resulting in a faster, more positive customer experience.

12.0 ASSISTANCE AVAILABLE

As an operator within the Containers for Change scheme you're part of a large group of businesses and individuals providing a service to the people of Queensland to make change in their local communities.

In addition to your designated Network Lead, Container Exchange (COEX) has a range of supports available to operators to help you manage your day-to-day business operations.

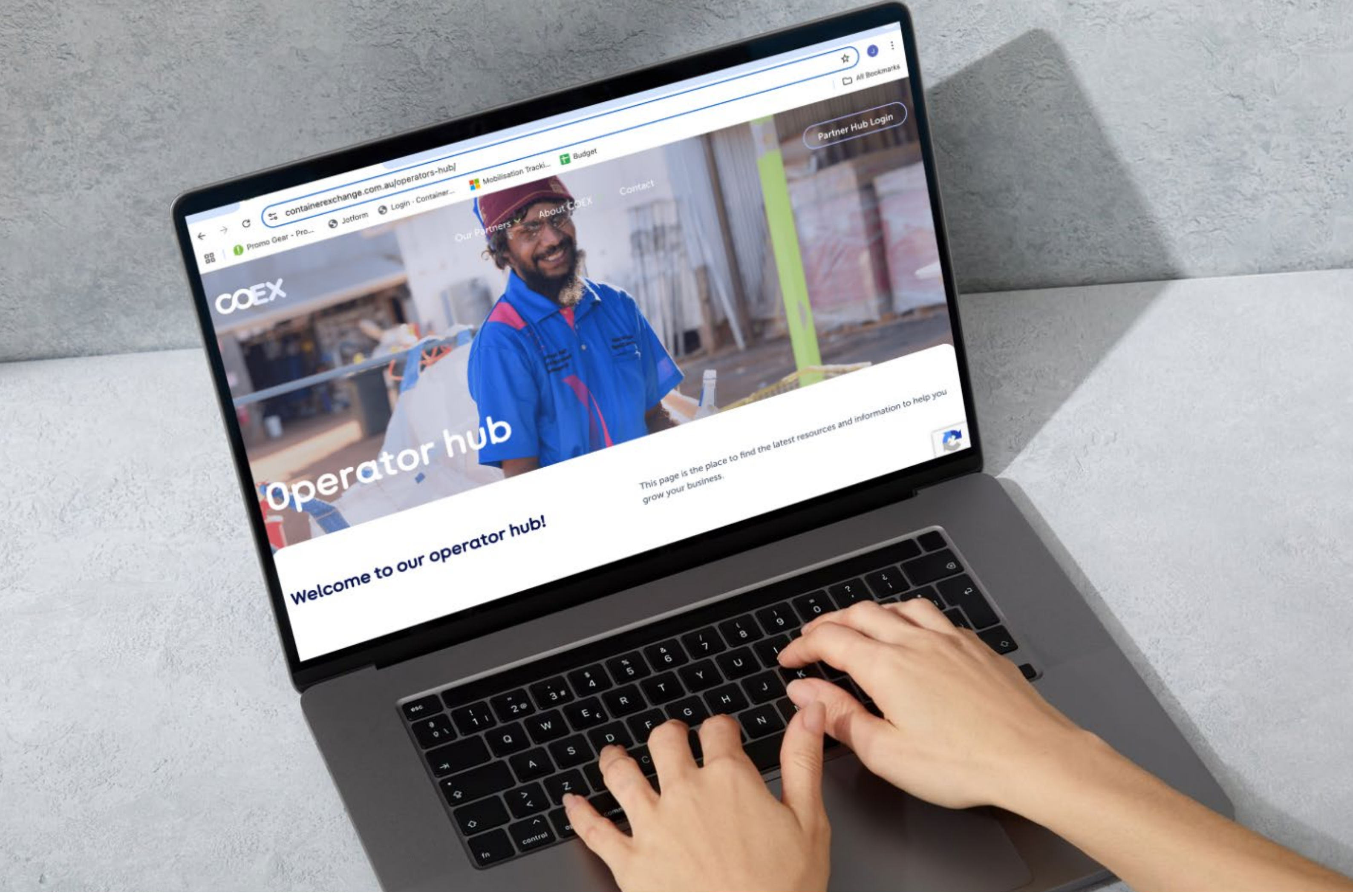
12.1 CONTAINER EXCHANGE (COEX) CONTACTS

From time to time, you'll need to contact COEX for operating enquiries that may arise. To ensure you're being connected to the right person or department and to reduce response times, please refer to the below table.

Table 5 – Container Exchange (COEX) contacts

Enquiry	Best contact
• Point of sale (POS) issues • Business Partner Portal issues • Reporting issues	**13 42 42** enquiries@containersforchange.com.au
• Day to day operational matters • Incident reports • Complaints • Good news stories • Merchandise enquiries or orders	**Your Network Lead** networklead@containerexchange.com.au
• Workplace health, safety and environment (WHSE) monthly reports • Job creation details • Responses to electronic direct mail (EDMs)	operations@containerexchange.com.au
• Adjustments • Payment claim discrepancies	finance@containersforchange.com.au
• Concerns regarding scheme material or suspicious behaviour	audit@containerexchange.com.au
• Marketing support • Marketing approvals when using the Containers for Change brand	marketing@containerexchange.com.au
• Enquiries on operating new sites • Layout advice for new sites	tenders@containerexchange.com.au

Keep in mind, the above table is not an exhaustive list. If you're unsure of where to direct your enquiry, please contact your Network Lead.



12.2 OPERATOR HUB

The operator hub is a handy tool which hosts any document you may need as a container refund point (CRP) operator. New training documents, guides, templates, policies and publications will continue to be added to the page.

The page also hosts any documents we've mentioned throughout The Green Guide for easy access.

The page sits on the Container Exchange (COEX) website [here](#) and is password-protected for operators' eyes only.

> If you've forgotten the password or can't find what you're looking for, please contact your Network Lead for assistance.

12.3 QUICK LINKS

Some helpful links to take you where you need to be, and quickly, are below.

Business Partner Portal

Charity member number look-up
To find the member numbers of the charities registered to accept container donations under Containers for Change.

Community group fundraising toolkit

Container Exchange (COEX) website

Containers for Change Qld app

Containers for Change website

Fair Work – Manufacturing and Associated Industries and Occupations Award

Fair Work – Waste Management Award

Brand Hub

Operator Hub
Filled with important documents referred to in The Green Guide and more, including training resources, guides, templates, policies and publications.

Product barcode look-up
Type in a product's barcode to see if the container is eligible or ineligible

Queensland Government grants

Member number retriever
For when registered customers don't remember their member number or would like to add their member number to their smartphone's digital wallet

Waste Reduction and Recycling Act 2011
The legislation that governs the Queensland CRS and any container refund point (CRP) business operating in the Queensland scheme.

Workplace Health and Safety Queensland website

containersforchange.com.au/qld
containerexchange.com.au