



LDB Report

by Todd Cooper

Know Before You Buy: Wholesale Return Guidelines

It's been more than a year since the wholesale pricing model was put into place, and your satisfaction continues to be our goal and top priority.

Now that the busy summer patio and barbeque season has arrived, it's a good time to provide wholesale customers with clarification on our wholesale return guidelines. Although all sales are final, there are limited circumstances where products may be eligible for a refund.

Generally, there are three types of situations where a refund may be applicable:

- 1) When the product is recalled by supplier/agent;
- 2) When the product is defective; or
- 3) When the Wholesale Customer Centre (WCC) makes an order entry error. In the case of an order entry error, the product must be returned in saleable condition.

We are often asked what "saleable" means. Saleable products are in the original condition and have not been opened. The seals, caps, labels, packaging and selling units are intact, no visible evidence of tampering can be seen, no age deterioration is present, and the product cannot be past its best before date.

Starting a Return Claim

To begin any return claim, please complete a Return Authorization Form and send it to the WCC. The form can be found on the resources page of the new wholesale operations website www.wholesale.bcldb.com and emailed to wholesalereturns@bcldb.com.

The Return Authorization Form outlines the information necessary for the WCC to evaluate the return request. On the Return Authorization Form, you must include a valid proof of purchase, identifying the invoice number for the product purchase, plus any applicable lot numbers or best before dates as required.

Since each return claim can be unique, we recommend you wait for further instructions after submitting the Return Authorization Form. The WCC may ask for photographs, bottle necks or the physical product returned back to the distribution centre before the claim can be processed.

Please note that products purchased from the WCC cannot be returned to a BC Liquor Store.

Quality Control Product Recalls

From time to time, products are recalled by the

supplier or agent. Recalled products can be stale-dated or have an off taste. When a product is recalled, the WCC will ask customers to remove the product from the selling floor and begin a reimbursement claim by completing a Return Authorization Form. Once the WCC has reviewed the Return Authorization Form, they will advise on next steps in the claim process.

The Essentials

Wholesale customers must count cases carefully before the delivery driver leaves or before picking up the product. Products are ineligible to be returned where "subject to recount", "subject to verification" or a similar statement has been noted on the Bill of Lading.

If an error has occurred or defective products have been received, you are asked to complete a Return Authorization Form within 48 hours. You should include a copy of the signed Bill of Lading and ensure an explanation of the error is included as well as the product name, container size, SKU or CSPC, number of selling units, invoice number, date and a signature of both the carrier and the consignee.

Defective Product Returns

It is possible to return defective products. These are bottles and cans broken in-transit by an LDB carrier or products not fit for consumption.

When a product is defective, each scenario tends to be a bit different, so, once you submit a Return Authorization Form, the WCC will reach out to you to discuss the next steps applicable to your specific situation. Next steps can include a request to inspect broken bottle necks, bottle labels, original packaging and receive destruction photographs prior to the refund. Once you have submitted the form, you are asked to wait for the WCC to contact you before taking any action.

In the instance where a consumer returns a defective product to the Licensee Retail Store (LRS), the LRS must fill out a Customer Return Information Form listing the SKU, consumer name, email/phone and the reason why the consumer has returned the product.

This form is in addition to the Return Authorization Form and the information provided will be protected in accordance with the Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act. The

Customer Return Information Form is not applicable for complaints made at a hospitality establishment.

For additional requirements surrounding defective product returns, please review the full return guidelines on www.wholesale.bcldb.com.

If the product is not defective but the quality does not meet your standards, please direct any concerns to the agent or supplier.

WCC Data Entry Returns

It is possible to return products where the WCC has made a data entry error or a picking error has occurred. To be eligible, you must reach out to the WCC within 48 hours of picking up or receiving a delivery by emailing wholesalereturns@bcldb.com. Should this happen, you are asked to submit a Return Authorization Form and a copy of the signed Bill of Lading to the WCC.

Once the Return Authorization Form is received, processed and approved by the WCC, the refund will be based on the original purchase price and applied to the credit card on file or refunded by a head office cheque. For a step-by-step guide to returning products under this circumstance, please review a copy of the full return guidelines on www.wholesale.bcldb.com.

Other Eligible Returns

In addition, products may be eligible for a refund if the wholesale customer has permanently closed or the liquor license has been suspended. All products approved for return must be in saleable condition. Our return guidelines located on our website expand on the additional details and requirements that apply to other eligible returns.

Products That Are Not Eligible For Return

The following products are not eligible to be returned by all LDB wholesale customers:

- Products with poor sales performance
- Products purchased directly from a distributor or supplier
- Products damaged at the wholesale customer's business
- Sample products opened for tastings
- Agent-stocked products
- Products purchased at a BC Liquor Store cannot be returned to the WCC