



**Earthware Reusables Inc.
Container Return Program**

Operating Processes & Procedures Guidebook

Version 2.0

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Developed in partnership by Earthware & ABDA



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NOTE:

Revisions to this Guidebook may be necessary from time-to-time. Participating Depots will be notified of revisions to these Policies and Procedures and an updated version of this Guidebook will be made available on Earthware’s website.

1. Earthware Reusable Containers – Program Background

A. Overview

Earthware Reusable Containers are an environmentally friendly alternative to many of the single-use, food-grade containers currently in use by restaurants, hotels and food retailers. This made-in-Alberta Reusable Container Program provides businesses and consumers with a turn-key solution that's simple and affordable.

The Earthware Reusable Depot Collection Program started with 13 depots in Calgary in the spring of 2023, and expanded to all eligible Calgary-area depots in January 2024. In the future, the Program is expected to be available in other urban centres around Alberta and beyond.

Earthware has partnered with Alberta Depots for collection services because Albertans trust depots and are familiar with the depot experience.

Alberta Depots are proud to have partnered with Earthware on this important recycling program.

B. How the Program Works

Earthware has designed an affordable, durable, and reusable, food-grade container that's suitable for all sorts of applications in restaurants, hotels and food businesses. Earthware has signed up various food-related businesses to participate in their Program. These businesses will use the Containers for their off-premises sales, such as take-out and delivery meals.

Earthware, and their food business partners, will let consumers know that they will be entitled to a deposit refund if they clean the containers and return them to a participating Alberta Depot.

Depots will collect the containers and regularly ship them to Earthware's cleaning facility where they will be properly cleaned and sanitized for reuse. Once cleaned, they will be put back into the system. The containers are designed for durability and will withstand dozens of cleanings.

C. Program Participants – This section provides a high-level overview of the role played by each program participant. Additional relevant details for participating depots will be provided in the operating section of this Guide.

- i) **Role of Earthware** - As the Program's creator and main promoter, Earthware is responsible for:
 - ⇒ Designing and procuring the reusable containers.
 - ⇒ Marketing their reusable container program to food businesses.
 - ⇒ Marketing the various environmental benefits of their program to consumers and ensuring that consumers know how the program works, including deposit refunds and container return requirements (e.g. cleanliness).
 - ⇒ Partnering with Alberta Depots on a deposit-return system designed to encourage consumers to bring their used food containers to participating bottle depots.

- ⇒ Arranging for the collection of used containers from depots and delivering them to their wash facility.
- ⇒ Cleaning and sanitizing the containers properly and returning them to their food business partners.
- ii) **Role of Food Businesses** – As the main distributors of the Earthware reusable containers, participating food businesses are responsible for:
 - ⇒ Having sufficient quantities of Earthware containers on-hand.
 - ⇒ Ensuring their customers are aware that their food containers are reusable and that clean containers can be returned to a participating depot for a deposit refund.
- iii) **Role of Consumers** – As the primary user of the Earthware container, the consumer is responsible for:
 - ⇒ Rinsing and storing the containers until they're ready to be returned to a depot.
 - ⇒ Bringing their clean and intact Earthware containers to a participating depot.
- iv) **Role of the Participating Depot** – As the collection system provider for Earthware, participating bottle depots are responsible for:
 - ⇒ Displaying program signage developed and paid for by Earthware.
 - ⇒ Inspecting the containers brought in by consumers to ensure they are Earthware containers and they are structurally undamaged.
 - ⇒ Inspecting the containers brought in by consumers to ensure that they are free of material that can create mold or other hazards.
 - ⇒ Paying the consumer an accurate deposit refund of 25-cents each for every bowl or lid accepted.
 - ⇒ Storing the containers in a storage bin supplied by Earthware where they will be safe from pests. Making arrangements with Earthware to ship the containers to their wash facility on a regular basis and in accordance with shipping requirements.
 - ⇒ Tracking quantities of incoming Earthware containers so that a shipping document is prepared and ready on the arranged day of shipment.
 - ⇒ Billing Earthware a fee for each bowl and lid shipped that is inclusive of the established deposit amount.
- v) **Role of the ABDA** – The ABDA is the main representative of participating depots and is responsible for:
 - ⇒ Recruiting and training bottle depots on the program.
 - ⇒ Monitoring collection effectiveness and efficiency with Earthware and recommending process improvements.
 - ⇒ Facilitating dispute resolution when needed.

D. Operating Processes & Procedures Guidebook (the “Guidebook”)

Earthware and ABDA have developed this Guidebook for depots, which will be updated when there are changes to processes or procedures. Both organizations are committed to making this program successful for all the program participants. Participating Depots are asked to contact Jerry Roczkowsky at earthware@albertadepot.ca with your feedback and suggestions for program improvements. These will be reviewed within ABDA and brought forward to Earthware for discussion should that be warranted.

2. Collection of Containers from Consumers

A. Overview & Expectations

The long-term success of the Earthware Program depends on consumers bringing their containers back to depots and in a condition that allows them to be reused, again and again. By providing Earthware’s customers with an extraordinary in-depot experience you will be contributing to the long-term success of the Program and to your bottom-line.

The key elements of an extraordinary in-depot experience are:

- Quick and efficient service from a friendly and knowledgeable staff member; and
- An accurate refund.

An Earthware customer may bring in their containers alone or together with beverage containers. We will leave it to the discretion of each individual Participating Depot to determine if the Earthware refund transaction is treated separately or as part of the beverage container order.

B. Identifying Acceptable Containers

While the Earthware container used by a food business consists of a separate top (or lid) and bottom (or bowl), for purposes of the deposit refund they will be treated individually. That means that the depot doesn’t need to ensure that there are an equal number of lids or bowls. A deposit refund of 25-cents will be paid for each lid or bowl returned. *(Example: The deposit refund on 5 bowls and 5 lids is \$2.50. The refund on 5 bowls and 1 lid is \$1.50)*

The first step in dealing with an Earthware return is to determine if the food container – lid or bowl - is in fact an Earthware container and that it is clean and free from structural damage. The expectation is that consumers will properly empty and rinse Earthware containers prior to bringing them to the depot. Unclean containers can support the growth of mold which poses a health and safety risk to employees. A depot employee may reject a customer’s Earthware order if they determine that the containers are unclean. In these situations, depot staff should request that the customer properly rinse out the container at home and return them another time.

Identifying an Acceptable Earthware Container – Bowls and Lids:

(a) **An Earthware bowl or lid is identified by the unique Earthware Logo placed on the outside of the lid and bowl**, along with the following messages:

- “RINSE & RETURN FOR REFUND”
- “AT BOTTLE DEPOTS ”
- “www.earthware.me”



- (b) An **example of an Earthware container** consisting of a separate bowl and lid is shown in Image 1, below:

IMAGE 1 – EARTHWARE 33 OZ. RECTANGULAR CONTAINER – Bowl + Lid



There are currently **8 container sizes in circulation in Calgary, which have a white bowl and clear lid, and are available in the following sizes:**

- **2 rectangular** containers - 33 oz. (ounces) and 100 oz.
- **6 round** containers – 15 oz, 27 oz, 28 oz, 37 oz, 38 oz & 54 oz.

NOTE: There are 5 additional sized containers on order that will be put into circulation later in the first quarter of 2024. These new sized containers have a **green bowl** and a **clear lid** and will come in the following sizes:

- 1 square container - 48 oz.
- 2 rectangular containers - 32 oz and 38 oz.
- 2 deli containers - 24 oz and 32 oz.

Remember for deposit refund purposes these containers consist of one “lid” and one “bowl” regardless of size. The 25-cent deposit is paid for each bowl returned and each lid returned to your depot.

Images of all thirteen Earthware containers can be seen in Schedule “A” attached.

(c) Inspecting for structural damage

Quickly check each bowl and lid for any obvious cracks or breaks – such as those shown in Image 2 below:



Refund Payable

A **deposit refund of 25 cents** will be paid for each undamaged genuine Earthware lid or box/bowl. Show any **damaged** lids and bowls to the customer and explain that they **cannot be accepted for reuse and refund because of the damage**.

In situations where some damaged lids or bowls are brought into the depot, encourage the customer to take the damaged items home and place them in the municipal recycling system (e.g. blue box or blue bag).

Protecting the Program from Counterfeit and “Look-alike” Containers

With the increased number of bylaws and regulations targeting single-use plastics we expect to see more plastic takeout containers in the marketplace. Some of these could resemble an Earthware container so it’s important that Depot personnel to be familiar with the look of the Earthware containers.

To protect the profitability and sustainability of the Program, **Depot personnel should keep an eye open for counterfeit or look-alike containers being brought into the depot and refuse to pay a refund on these non-program containers.**

When rejecting a container, whether because it is a dirty or damaged Earthware container or because it’s not a genuine Earthware container, please treat the customer professionally and simply explain the reason for the rejection.

C. Entry of Return Transaction into POS

Each participating depot will need to establish its own practices for recording the number of Earthware bowls and lids accepted, for calculating the amount of the refund, and for issuing the cash refund. The following are examples of how these can be treated within various POR's used by depots:

- i) **rePOR Users** – ABDA will work with each Participating Depot to customize their buying screen to accept Earthware containers.

Depots using rePOR would perform the following steps for a Earthware return:

- (a) Open a new transaction.
 - (b) Enter in the number of undamaged Earthware lids accepted;
 - (c) Enter in the number of undamaged Earthware bowls accepted;
 - (d) Complete the transaction and print out the receipt.
- ii) **Solum Users** – Ideaz is aware of the Earthware Container Collection Program. **Please contact Ideaz directly** to discuss adding Earthware buying functionality to the Solum front-end and other related POR information.
 - iii) **Neosmart Users** – Neosmart is aware of the Earthware Container Collection Program. **Please contact Neosmart directly** to discuss adding Earthware buying functionality to the Neosmart front-end and other related POR information.

3. Sorting and Storing Containers

A. Overview & Expectations

For purposes of sorting and shipping, all Earthware bowls and lids will be comingled and stored in a single storage bin where they will be kept until they are ready for shipment. The lidded storage bin will be provided by Earthware and replaced as needed.

This storage bin will be lined with a large plastic bag supplied by Earthware which will become the shipping container when it's time to ship. The size and style of the Earthware bin may vary by Depot.



As the Earthware Program continues to grow its restaurant partnerships, the number of Earthware containers in use and in customer homes will be growing each month but it may take a while before these containers start to make their way into depots. Therefore, return volumes may be sporadic.

Each depot will want to establish a sorting process that works for them. You will want to decide how often the returned Earthware bowls and lids are moved from the front of the depot and placed in the storage bin and the container tally sheet updated.

B. Sorting Requirements

As noted above, all acceptable Earthware bowls and lids will be comingled and stored in a single storage bin. There are no other additional sorting requirements at this time.

C. Counting & Storing Containers

ABDA recommends the use of a **Tally-sheet** to keep track of the number of bowls and lids placed in the Earthware storage bin. **A sample Tally Sheet is provided in Schedule B, attached.**

4. Scheduling Containers for Pick-up

A. Overview & Expectations

As noted in Section 3, return volumes for Earthware containers may be sporadic. As more Earthware containers are placed into the Program we expect volumes arriving at depots to increase.

Earthware has signaled a strong desire to work with participating Depots on developing a pick-up schedule that meets their individual needs, while balancing the need to collect the containers frequently to avoid the growth of mold or presence of pests.

We anticipate that Depots will want to arrange for a bag pick-up when the following occurs:

1. The collection bin is full, or
2. 4 weeks have past since the last pick-up, or
3. The depot wishes the bag to be picked up for some other reason.

B. Scheduling Requirements

- i) **Scheduling** - Pick-ups should be arranged by noon, 2 business days in advance of the desired pick-up date. For example, if a pick-up is desired for Wednesday, the depot must make arrangements before noon on Monday (the previous Friday at 3:00 pm would also work). Earthware will offer three pick-up windows: 9:00 am-11:00 am, 11:00 am-1:00 pm, 1:00 pm-3:00 pm.
- ii) **Who to Call** – Pick-up arrangements can be made during regular business hours (9:00 am to 4:00 pm, Monday through Friday) **by calling**:
 - ⇒ **Vere Adamson** – Warehouse Manager – **(587) 896-2725** vadamson@earthware.me .
 - Should you not get through to Vere, a secondary contact is:
 - ⇒ **Charlotte Marshall** at Earthware Administration – **(403) 700-4138** cmarshall@earthware.me .
- iii) **Pick-up Timing** – Earthware’s pick-up service will arrive within the two-hour window selected by the Depot. The Depot should have the Earthware plastic bag containing the bowls and lids along with the shipping/invoicing document **ready to go** before the scheduled time slot.
- iv) **Shipping/invoicing document** – the next section explains how to complete the shipping/invoicing document.

5. Preparing the Shipping/Billing Document

A. Overview & Expectations

At the outset, Earthware Program administration will be highly manual. In time, once volumes have significantly increased, we expect to automate portions of the administration to improve efficiency.

The document created by the depot at the time of shipping will serve as both a **shipping document** (that describes what is in the shipment) and as a **billing document** (that identifies how much Earthware is to pay the depot for the containers shipped).

This Section provides instructions on completing the Shipping/Billing document manually.

B. Completing the Shipping/Invoicing Document

- i) **Schedule C – attached** – presents the format of the **shipping/billing document** required by Earthware. This document will be available as both a fillable PDF that can be completed by PC and as a regular PDF that the Depot can complete by hand.

One copy of the shipping/invoicing document should be prepared by the Depot to accompany the shipment and a second copy retained for the Depot's records. When picking up the shipment the carrier will sign the document and take an image of it for the carrier's records.

- ii) The first section of the document identifies information about your participating depot:

- a. Depot name
- b. Depot address
- c. Depot code (assigned by Earthware)

- iii) The second section of the document identifies information about the shipment:

- d. Shipment date
- e. Shipment/billing number (assigned by the Depot)
- f. Total number of lids being shipped
- g. Total number of bowls being shipped
- h. Total number of Earthware Containers shipped (f + g)

- iv) The third section of the document is the billing section which shows:

- i. Depot Fee for Earthware Containers shipped - calculated at **\$0.35 times the "Total number of Earthware Containers Shipped"** ("h", above)

[Note: the Depot Fee includes reimbursement of the \$0.25 deposit paid to the customer]

- j. Total Depot Fee
- k. GST calculated at 5% of the Total Depot Fee
- l. Total Billed (sum of j and k)

C. Including the Shipping/Billing Document with the Shipment

- i) The original copy of the Shipping/Billing document should be placed in a plastic sleeve provided by Earthware, and kept with the plastic bag full of Earthware containers awaiting pickup.

- ii) When the Earthware driver arrives, they will capture an image of the Shipping/Billing document and then place it inside of the plastic shipping container (bag) and then seal the bag with a twist-tie and take it away.

D. Earthware Quality Control Procedures

- i) Once the containers are brought back to Earthware for processing, their personnel will be checking to ensure that containers belong to the Earthware Program, are reasonably clean, are free from damage, and that quantities noted on the shipping documents are correct. If any issues are identified by Earthware personnel, they will contact the depot as outlined in Section E, below.
- ii) From time-to-time, the Earthware driver may perform a QC spot-check right at the depot as part of the pick-up process.
 - ⇒ It is up to the driver to perform the spot-check and Depot personnel need not provide assistance.
 - ⇒ If issues are identified, the driver will discuss these with the appropriate depot supervisor. Should it be necessary, adjustments to the shipping/billing document will be made on the spot.
 - ⇒ Please note that the even if a spot-check is performed at the depot by the driver, a secondary inspection will be performed by Earthware personnel at their warehouse. It is possible that this secondary inspection could identify some issues not detected by the driver.

E. Shipment Processing by Earthware

- i) Earthware will process shipments received from Depots within 2 business days following the date of shipment and should any issues be identified, contact the depot within 1 business day of processing the shipment.
 - ⇒ Earthware will maintain a contact list of participating depots that will contain the name and contact information of the person that will be responsible for addressing issues with shipments and payments.
 - ⇒ Depots will promptly inform Earthware and ABDA of any changes in their contact person.

6. Payments to Participating Depots

A. Overview and Expectations

Earthware will pay the Depot within **10 calendar days of the shipping date** and for the Total Billed amount identified on the Shipping/Billing document unless the Depot is contacted about a shipping/billing discrepancy within 3 days of the shipping date.

B. Agreed Payment Schedule

A payment schedule will be developed by Earthware once volumes increase to a level where depots are seeing multiple pick-ups a week. In the meantime, payments will be made within 10-days of pick-up.

7. Handling Disputes and Dispute Resolution

A. Overview and Expectations

Earthware, ABDA and participating depots are committed to making the Earthware program a success and we anticipate that concerns and issues will be addressed and resolved quickly, fairly, and in everyone's best interest. The ABDA and Earthware will work closely on monitoring collections to identify issues early and solve them before they become a bigger problem.

That said, issues may arise from time-to-time that are specific to one or two depots. In these specific cases ABDA and the impacted depots will work together on developing a solution satisfactory to Earthware and the Depot.

B. The Dispute Resolution Process

i) Dispute Resolution Process for disputes that impact all, or a large segment of, participating depots. The process will work as follows:

⇒ **If a matter of significant concern or issue is identified by participating depots and brought to the attention of ABDA, the following process will apply:**

- (a) Once ABDA determines that a matter of significance has been identified, ABDA will inform Earthware in writing of the nature of the concern or issue along with relevant details.
- (b) Earthware will have two business days to respond in writing to ABDA's notification including alternative solutions and a time frame for implementation or a declaration that resolution of the matter requires negotiation.
- (c) ABDA will have five business days from the date of Earthware's Response to accept one of the alternative solutions offered or agree to meet for further negotiation. Should further negotiation be required a first meeting will be held within two weeks. The parties agree that reasonable commercial efforts will be used to arrive at a satisfactory negotiated solution within two weeks of the initial first meeting.
- (d) Should parties not arrive at a satisfactory solution within the timeframe outlined above they must (a) both agree to enter into an arbitration process or (b) Earthware will have the right to issue a Termination Notice under Article 4 of the Service Agreement.

⇒ **If a matter of significant concern or issue is identified by Earthware, the following process will apply:**

- (a) Earthware will inform ABDA in writing of the nature of the concern or issue along with relevant details.
- (b) ABDA will have five business days to convene with participating depots and respond in writing to Earthware's notification. The written response should include alternative solutions and a time frame for implementation or a declaration that resolution of the matter requires negotiation.

- (c) Earthware will have five business days from the date of ABDA's Response to accept one of the alternative solutions offered or agree to meet for further negotiation. Should further negotiation be required, a first meeting will be held within two weeks. The parties agree that reasonable commercial efforts will be used to arrive at a satisfactory negotiated solution within two weeks of the initial first meeting.
- (d) Should parties not arrive at a satisfactory solution within the timeframe outlined above they must (a) both agree to enter into an arbitration process or (b) ABDA and participating depots will have the right to issue a Termination Notice under Article 4 of the Service Agreement.

ii) Dispute Resolution Process for specific disputes that impact only one or two participating depots. The processes will work as follows during the Pilot Period:

- ⇒ **For issues that Earthware is having with individual depots** (e.g. accepting damaged containers from customers and shipping them to Earthware) Earthware will email the Depot's contact person as soon as practical and will copy ABDA on the email (i.e. cc: earthware@albertadepot.ca) . Earthware will provide sufficient specifics that will allow the depot to address the matter (e.g. dates, times, other relevant details).
 - (a) Depot will use reasonable efforts to respond in writing within two business days.
 - (b) Earthware and Depot will work together and in good faith to produce a satisfactory solution within 7 business days from the date of Earthware's written notification.
 - (c) Should the issue remain unresolved after the 7 day period noted in (b), Earthware will engage ABDA to assist with mediating the issue with the Depot.
- ⇒ **For an issue that an individual Depot is having with Earthware** (e.g. numerous missed pick-ups) Depot will email the Earthware Operations Manager:

Charlotte Marshall (cmarshall@earthware.me)

 as soon as practical and will copy ABDA on the email (i.e. cc: earthware@albertadepot.ca) . Depot will provide sufficient specifics that will allow Earthware to address the matter (e.g. dates, times, other relevant details).
 - (a) Earthware will use reasonable efforts to respond in writing within two business days.
 - (b) Earthware and Depot will work together and in good faith to produce a satisfactory solution within 7 business days from the date of Earthware's written notification.
 - (c) Should the issue remain unresolved after the 7 day period noted in (b), Depot will engage ABDA to assist with mediating the issue with Earthware.

SCHEDULE A – EARTHWARE SYSTEM CONTAINERS

The following images are of the thirteen (13) types of containers to be accepted by Participating Depots as of January 4, 2024. Note that the five containers shown at the bottom are not currently in circulation but are expected to be added later in Q1 of 2024.

<p><u>15 oz – Round</u></p> 	<p><u>27 oz – Round</u></p> 	<p><u>28 oz – Round</u></p> 
<p><u>37 oz – Round</u></p> 	<p><u>54 oz – Round</u></p> 	<p><u>38 oz - Round</u></p> 
<p><u>33 oz – Rectangular</u></p> 	<p><u>100 oz – Rectangular</u></p> 	
<p>COMING SOON - Q1, 2024:</p>		
<p><u>38 oz - Rectangular</u></p> 	<p><u>32 oz – Rectangular</u></p> 	<p><u>48 oz - Square</u></p> 
<p><u>24 oz Deli</u></p> 	<p><u>32 oz Deli</u></p> 	

SCHEDULE B – EARTHWARE CONTAINERS – SAMPLE TALLY SHEET

Earthware Container Tally Sheet

Bowls

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20
21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30
31	32	33	34	35	36	37	38	39	40
41	42	43	44	45	46	47	48	49	50
51	52	53	54	55	56	57	58	59	60
61	62	63	64	65	66	67	68	69	70
71	72	73	74	75	76	77	78	79	80
81	82	83	84	85	86	87	88	89	90
91	92	93	94	95	96	97	98	99	100

Lids

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20
21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30
31	32	33	34	35	36	37	38	39	40
41	42	43	44	45	46	47	48	49	50
51	52	53	54	55	56	57	58	59	60
61	62	63	64	65	66	67	68	69	70
71	72	73	74	75	76	77	78	79	80
81	82	83	84	85	86	87	88	89	90
91	92	93	94	95	96	97	98	99	100

Initial or mark each box to track quantities of bowls and lids separately. Use the final number on your shipping document.

Shipment ID:

Shipped Date:

SCHEDULE C – EARTHWARE CONTAINERS – SHIPPING/BILLING DOCUMENT

EARTHWARE SHIPPING / BILLING DOCUMENT

Depot Name: Shipping / Billing No:

Depot Address:
 Shipping Date:

Depot ID (Earthware ID)

SHIPPED TO EARTHWARE

Shipping Details:	Quantity	Fee per Unit	Total Fees This Shipment	GST	Billing Total
Quantity of Earthware Lids Shipped	100				
Quantity of Earthware Bowls Shipped	100				
Total Quantity of Containers Shipped	200	\$ 0.35	\$ 70.00	\$ 3.50	\$ 73.50

SCHEDULE D – CONTACT LIST & ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

For Pick-ups:

- ⇒ Vere Adamson – Warehouse Manager
- ⇒ (587) 896-2725 - vadamson@earthware.me

For Operational Enquiries:

- ⇒ Charlotte Marshall at Earthware Administration
- ⇒ (403) 700-4138 - cmarshall@earthware.me

To Provide Feedback & Suggestions or to get answers to questions not addressed by this Guide:

- ⇒ Earthware@albertadepot.ca

Earthware Website

- ⇒ Earthware.me

ABDA's Earthware Page

- ⇒ abda.ca/earthware