

Standard Operating Procedure (SOP): Product Returns, Exchanges, and Refund Policy

This SOP details the **product returns, exchanges, and refund policy**, covering the procedures for accepting returned products, eligibility criteria for returns and exchanges, timelines for submission, condition requirements for returned items, documentation needed, refund processing methods, and communication protocols with customers. The objective is to provide a clear, consistent, and customer-friendly process that protects both the business interests and customer satisfaction by efficiently handling returns, exchanges, and refunds.

1. Scope

This SOP applies to all products sold directly by the company to end customers. It includes physical goods unless otherwise stated in individual product disclaimers.

2. Eligibility Criteria

- Products must be returned within **30 days** of the original purchase date unless otherwise specified.
- Items must be unused, in original packaging, and in resalable condition.
- Certain items (e.g., personalized goods, perishable items, final sale products) are not eligible for return unless defective or damaged.
- Proof of purchase (invoice, order confirmation, or receipt) is required for all returns/exchanges.

3. Procedure for Returns & Exchanges

1. **Customer Initiation:**
 - Customer contacts Customer Service via email, phone, or online returns portal within the valid return window.
 - Customer provides order number, item(s) to return/exchange, reason for return, and relevant photographs (if damaged or defective).
2. **Authorization:**
 - Customer Service reviews the request and checks eligibility criteria.
 - Authorized returns receive a Return Authorization Number (RAN) and shipping instructions.
3. **Return Shipping:**
 - Customer arranges shipment, using prepaid label if applicable. Shipping costs may be customer's responsibility unless the item is defective, incorrect, or damaged.
 - Returned item must include RAN and all required documentation.
4. **Inspection:**
 - Upon receipt, Quality Control inspects the item for condition and eligibility.
 - Customer is notified within **5 business days** of the inspection outcome.
5. **Approval & Processing:**
 - If approved, process the return or exchange per customer's request.
 - If denied, item may be sent back to customer at their expense.

4. Refund Policy & Methods

- Approved refunds are processed via original payment method (credit card, PayPal, or other), unless otherwise requested and approved.
- Allow up to **7-10 business days** after approval for funds to appear based on bank/payment provider policies.
- Shipping charges are non-refundable unless return is due to company error or product defect.
- Partial refunds may apply for items not in original condition.

5. Communication Protocols

- All customer communications must be timely, clear, and courteous.
- Customers will receive email confirmation at all major steps: receipt of request, authorization, item receipt, and refund/exchange completion.
- Escalate unresolved issues to supervisor/manager as required.

6. Documentation

- Maintain records of all returns, exchanges, communications, and refund transactions for a minimum of **12 months**.
- Attach all related correspondence and proof of return to the customer's account/order in the system.

7. Review & Policy Updates

- This SOP is reviewed annually or as needed due to changes in corporate policy or regulatory requirements.
- Updates communicated to all relevant staff and incorporated into training as required.

Effective Date: [Insert Date]

Prepared by: [Insert Name/Department]

Approved by: [Insert Name/Department]