

SOP Template: Returns and Exchanges Procedure

This SOP details the **returns and exchanges procedure**, covering criteria for eligible returns and exchanges, steps for processing requests, inspection and approval guidelines, documentation requirements, refund and replacement policies, communication protocols with customers, and timeline management. The aim is to ensure a consistent, efficient, and customer-friendly process that maintains product quality and satisfaction while protecting company interests.

1. Purpose

To establish a standardized process for handling product returns and exchanges to ensure customer satisfaction and protect company interests.

2. Scope

This SOP applies to all customer-initiated product returns and exchanges across all sales channels.

3. Criteria for Eligible Returns and Exchanges

- Product must be returned within **30 days** of delivery date.
- Product must be unused, in original packaging, and in salable condition unless defective or damaged upon receipt.
- Proof of purchase (order confirmation, receipt, or invoice) required.
- Non-returnable items (e.g., personalized or final sale items) are excluded.
- Product defects or damages must be documented with photographs for claim approval.

4. Steps for Processing Return and Exchange Requests

1. Customer submits return/exchange request via approved channel (e.g., website, email, customer service hotline).
2. Team reviews request for eligibility criteria and confirms receipt within **2 business days**.
3. If eligible, issue a Return Authorization (RA) number and return shipping instructions.
4. Customer returns the item using the provided instructions.
5. Upon receipt, product is logged into the return system for inspection.

5. Inspection and Approval Guidelines

- Inspect returned product for damage, usage, and compliance with return policy.
- Document findings and take photographs if necessary.
- Complete inspection within **3 business days** of receipt.
- If item fails inspection, notify customer with reasons and return the product if necessary.
- If approved, proceed to initiate refund or replacement process.

6. Documentation Requirements

- Return Authorization (RA) form, including order number, RA number, customer contact, and item details.
- Inspection checklist for quality control.
- Communication logs with the customer.
- Proof of refund or exchange processed.

7. Refund and Replacement Policies

Condition	Customer Option	Timeline
Defective/Damaged product	Full refund or replacement (including return shipping)	Within 5 business days of approval
Customer remorse (within policy terms)	Refund minus original shipping; customer pays return shipping	Within 5 business days of approval
Incorrect item shipped	Full refund or correct replacement (company covers shipping)	Within 5 business days of approval

8. Communication Protocols with Customers

- Send acknowledgment of request within **2 business days**.
- Provide regular status updates (inspection, approval, refund/replacement initiation).
- Use clear, courteous language in all communication.
- Provide reference numbers for tracking and future reference.

9. Timeline Management

- Acknowledge return/exchange requests within **2 business days**.
- Complete inspection and approval within **3 business days** of item receipt.
- Process refunds or replacements within **5 business days** of approval.
- Monitor and report on turnaround times monthly to ensure compliance.

10. Responsibilities

- **Customer Service Team:** Initial request review, communication, documentation.
- **Returns Department:** Inspection, approval, and processing.
- **Finance Team:** Refund processing.
- **Logistics Team:** Shipping and receiving coordination.

11. Review and Updates

This SOP should be reviewed annually or as required to incorporate changes in company policy, legal requirements, or customer feedback.