

SOP: Approval and Authorization Procedures for Returns/Exchanges

This SOP defines the **approval and authorization procedures for returns and exchanges**, detailing the steps required for evaluating, approving, and processing customer return and exchange requests. It includes criteria for eligibility, roles and responsibilities of staff, documentation requirements, and timelines for decision-making to ensure consistent and efficient handling of returns and exchanges in compliance with company policies.

1. Purpose

To establish standardized procedures for the approval and authorization of customer returns and exchanges, ensuring a fair, efficient, and compliant process.

2. Scope

This SOP applies to all customer-initiated returns and exchanges of products purchased from [Company Name].

3. Definitions

- **Return:** The process whereby a customer returns a purchased product for a refund or store credit.
- **Exchange:** The process of replacing a returned product with another item of equal or similar value.

4. Responsibilities

Role	Responsibilities
Customer Service Representative	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Receive and document return/exchange requests.• Verify initial eligibility criteria.• Communicate with customers regarding requirements and status.
Returns/Exchanges Supervisor	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Review supporting documentation and eligibility.• Approve, escalate, or reject requests as appropriate.
Finance Department	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Process refunds or credits upon authorization.
Warehouse/Logistics	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Inspect returned items.• Restock or dispose of items according to policy.

5. Procedure

- Customer Initiates Request**
 - Customer contacts Customer Service via email, phone, or returns portal within [X] days of purchase.
 - Submit proof of purchase and reason for return/exchange.
- Initial Assessment**
 - Check if the item is within the allowed return/exchange window ([X] days from purchase).
 - Verify that item is unused, in original packaging, and not excluded under the policy (e.g., final sale items).
- Authorization**
 - Eligible requests are forwarded to the Returns/Exchanges Supervisor for final approval.
 - Supervisor reviews documentation and provides approval or denial within [Y] business days.
- Return Process**
 - If approved, provide customer with return instructions and shipping label if applicable.
 - Receive returned item and conduct inspection for compliance with company policy.
- Final Processing**

- If the return/exchange meets all criteria, process refund or arrange shipment of replacement product.
- Update records and notify customer of resolution.

6. Documentation

- Return/Exchange Request Form
- Proof of Purchase
- Inspection Report
- Authorization Records (digital or signed forms)

7. Timelines

- Customer to initiate request within [X] days of purchase.
- Initial assessment completed within [Y] business days.
- Final authorization and notification within [Z] business days of receiving item.
- Refunds processed within [W] business days after approval.

8. Compliance

All returns and exchanges must comply with company policy, consumer protection regulations, and relevant data privacy laws.

9. Revision History

Version	Date	Description	Author
1.0	[Date]	Initial SOP creation	[Author]