

SOP: Returns, Exchanges, and Refund Procedures

This SOP details the **returns, exchanges, and refund procedures** to ensure a consistent and efficient process for handling customer returns and exchanges. It covers eligibility criteria, documentation requirements, timelines for processing requests, methods of refund, and communication protocols with customers. The aim is to enhance customer satisfaction, maintain accurate records, and minimize financial discrepancies by adhering to standardized policies and procedures.

1. Scope

This Standard Operating Procedure applies to all customer returns, exchanges, and refund processes for products purchased through official company channels.

2. Responsibility

- Customer Service Team: Receive and process return and exchange requests; communicate with customers.
- Warehouse/Returns Department: Inspect returned items and process restocking or replacement as necessary.
- Finance Department: Process and document refunds to customers.
- Management: Oversee compliance and review exceptions.

3. Procedures

3.1 Eligibility Criteria

- Product must be returned within **30 days** of delivery date unless otherwise specified.
- Items must be unused, in original packaging, and with all included accessories/manuals.
- Certain products (e.g., custom, clearance, perishable, or intimate items) may be non-returnable; review product-specific policies.
- Proof of purchase (order number, invoice) is required.

3.2 Return/Exchange Request Process

1. Customer submits a return/exchange request via online portal, email, or phone.
2. Customer Service reviews request for eligibility and provides Return Merchandise Authorization (RMA) number if approved.
3. Customer ships item(s) to designated return address with RMA number clearly marked.

3.3 Inspection & Approval

1. Warehouse/Returns Department receives and inspects returned item within **3 business days** of arrival.
2. If the item:
 - **Meets** eligibility: Proceed with refund or exchange.
 - **Does not meet** eligibility: Notify customer with reason and return item at customer's expense (if applicable).

3.4 Processing Refunds and Exchanges

- Refunds are initiated within **5 business days** of approval.
- Refunds are processed using the original payment method unless otherwise arranged.
- Exchanges are shipped within **3 business days** of approval, subject to product availability.
- Notify customer when refund/exchange is complete, including transaction reference or tracking info.

3.5 Communication Protocols

- Communicate all steps to customer via their preferred method (email, portal, phone).
- Respond to customer requests within **1 business day**.
- Provide clear instructions and timelines at each stage.

4. Documentation Requirements

- Record of return/exchange request and RMA number.
- Proof of purchase and product images (if applicable).
- Inspection results and reason for approval/rejection.
- Refund or exchange processing details and communication logs.

5. Exceptions & Escalations

- Escalate unresolved or disputed cases to Management within **2 business days**.
- Management may authorize exceptions to policy in special circumstances.

6. Timelines Overview

Step	Timeframe
Return/Exchange Request Acknowledgment	Within 1 business day
Inspection of Returned Item	Within 3 business days of receipt
Refund Processing	Within 5 business days of approval
Exchange Shipping	Within 3 business days of approval
Escalation of Exceptions	Within 2 business days

7. Revision History

Date	Version	Description
2024-06-09	1.0	Initial template