

# SOP: Returns and Refunds Authorization and Verification

This SOP details the **returns and refunds authorization and verification** process, encompassing the criteria for return eligibility, documentation requirements, verification procedures, approval workflows, and communication protocols. It aims to ensure a consistent, transparent, and efficient handling of customer returns and refunds, minimizing errors and fraud while maintaining customer satisfaction and compliance with company policies.

## 1. Purpose

To outline standardized procedures for authorizing and verifying returns and refunds to ensure accuracy, fraud prevention, and timely resolution, in alignment with company policies and regulatory requirements.

## 2. Scope

This SOP applies to all customer returns and refund requests across all channels (in-store, online, and phone orders).

## 3. Definitions

- **Return:** The process by which a customer returns purchased merchandise.
- **Refund:** The repayment of the original transaction amount to the customer following a return or claim.
- **RMA:** Return Merchandise Authorization, a unique reference number for tracking returns.

## 4. Responsibilities

- **Customer Service:** Receives and documents return/refund requests.
- **Returns Team:** Verifies eligibility, inspects products, documents findings.
- **Finance Team:** Processes approved refunds and maintains records.
- **Supervisors/Managers:** Approve exceptions and oversee compliance.

## 5. Procedure

### 5.1 Return Eligibility Criteria

- Return must be requested within **[X] days** of purchase/delivery.
- Item must be in original condition (unused, with tags/packaging).
- Proof of purchase (receipt or order number) is required.
- Non-returnable items: customized, perishable, final sale, etc.

### 5.2 Documentation Requirements

- Completed Return Request Form (digital or paper)
- Proof of purchase
- Photos of item (if applicable)
- RMA assigned and recorded

### 5.3 Verification Procedures

1. Verify customer details and purchase record.
2. Confirm eligibility criteria are met.
3. Inspect returned item(s) upon receipt.
4. Document condition and findings in return log.

## 5.4 Approval Workflow

Stage	Action	Responsible
1. Request Received	Collect initial information and issue RMA	Customer Service
2. Verification	Check eligibility and inspect product	Returns Team
3. Approval	Authorize or reject return/refund	Supervisor/Manager
4. Processing	Issue refund/replacement and update records	Finance Team

## 5.5 Communication Protocols

- Notify customer of receipt of return/refund request (within 1 business day).
- Update customer at each stage (approval/denial, refund issued, etc.).
- Provide clear instructions for shipping/returning item, if applicable.
- Retain communication and documentation records per company policy.

## 6. Records and Documentation

- Maintain all return/refund-related documents for a minimum of **[Y] years**.
- Archive RMA logs, inspection reports, refund transaction records, and related correspondence.

## 7. Compliance and Audit

- Regular audits to ensure adherence to this SOP.
- Non-compliance must be reported to supervisors for review.

## 8. Revision History

Date	Revision	Description	Author
[yyyy-mm-dd]	1.0	Initial Release	[Name]