

July 2022

REPORT ON  
**2022 BEVERAGE CONTAINER  
DEPOT EXIT INTERVIEW SURVEY**

Prepared for the Beverage Container Management Board by PRA Inc.



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# METHODOLOGY AND NOTES

- The BCMB reached out to 30 beverage container depots in Alberta who agreed to take part in this study.
- Starting in 2021, as a result of the pandemic, the survey has been fielded online only rather than in person. PRA developed business card handouts with a link to the online survey, each with a unique survey PIN. The cards were distributed to each depot, who then handed them out to customers who made a beverage container return, with a goal of 60 completed surveys from each depot. Survey participants had the option of accepting a \$5 e-gift card upon completion. This methodology was repeated for the 2022 study.
- 17 of the 30 depots were able to reach the target of 60 completed surveys. It should be noted that one depot did not complete any surveys and another completed only one. In total, the study resulted in 1,292 completed surveys across all participating depots.
- For a profile of 2022 respondents and depot locations, please see Appendix A.

## **Report notes**

- All results in this report are presented out of the total n-size (2022, n=1,292; 2021, n=1,357) unless otherwise stated. Comparisons to 2021 are provided where possible.
- Percentages in tables and graphs may not always sum to 100% due to rounding.
- All differences between groups have a p-value of less than .05 unless otherwise stated.

# 2022 DEPOT PARTICIPATION

Classification	Depot	Municipality	Completed surveys	Classification	Depot	Municipality	Completed surveys
Rural	Banff Bottle Depot	Banff	60	Urban	Plus II Bottle Depot	Grande Prairie	60
Metro	Bowness Bottle Depot	Calgary	41	Urban	Recycle Plus I Bottle Depot	Grande Prairie	60
Metro	City Centre Bottle Depot	Edmonton	60	Urban	REDI Bottle Depot	Medicine Hat	6
Urban	Cold Lake Bottle Depot	Cold Lake	60	Urban	St. Albert Bottle Refund Centre	St. Albert	60
Urban	Cosmos I Bottle Depot	Red Deer	60	Urban	Stony Plain Bottle Depot	Stony Plain	60
Metro	Country Hills Bottle Depot	Calgary	12	Rural	Sylvan Lake Bottle Depot	Sylvan Lake	18
Rural	Drumheller Bottle Depot	Drumheller	46	Metro	The Green Bottle Depot Harvest Hills Ltd.	Edmonton	60
Rural	Easy Saving Bottle Depot	Falun	23	Metro	The Green Bottle Depot Windermere	Edmonton	60
Rural	Elk Point Universal Bottle Depot	Elk Point	12	Metro	Triple H Southside Bottle Depot	Edmonton	60
Urban	GPS Container Depot Ltd. - West	Lethbridge	60	Urban	Universal Bottle Depot	Camrose	10
Rural	High Level Bottle Depot	High Level	9	Metro	Uptown Depot Ltd.	Calgary	60
Rural	Innisfree Bottle Depot	Innisfree	1	Metro	Vecova Bottle Depot	Calgary	60
Rural	K.J. Cameron Services Industries	Pincher Creek	60	Metro	West Edmonton Bottle Depot	Edmonton	58
Urban	Leduc Bottle Depot	Leduc	60	Rural	Whitecourt Bottle Depot	Whitecourt	0
Rural	Pick Me Bottle Depot & Pop Shoppe	Devon	36	Metro	Winterburn Bottle Depot	Edmonton	60

# CUSTOMER EXPERIENCE

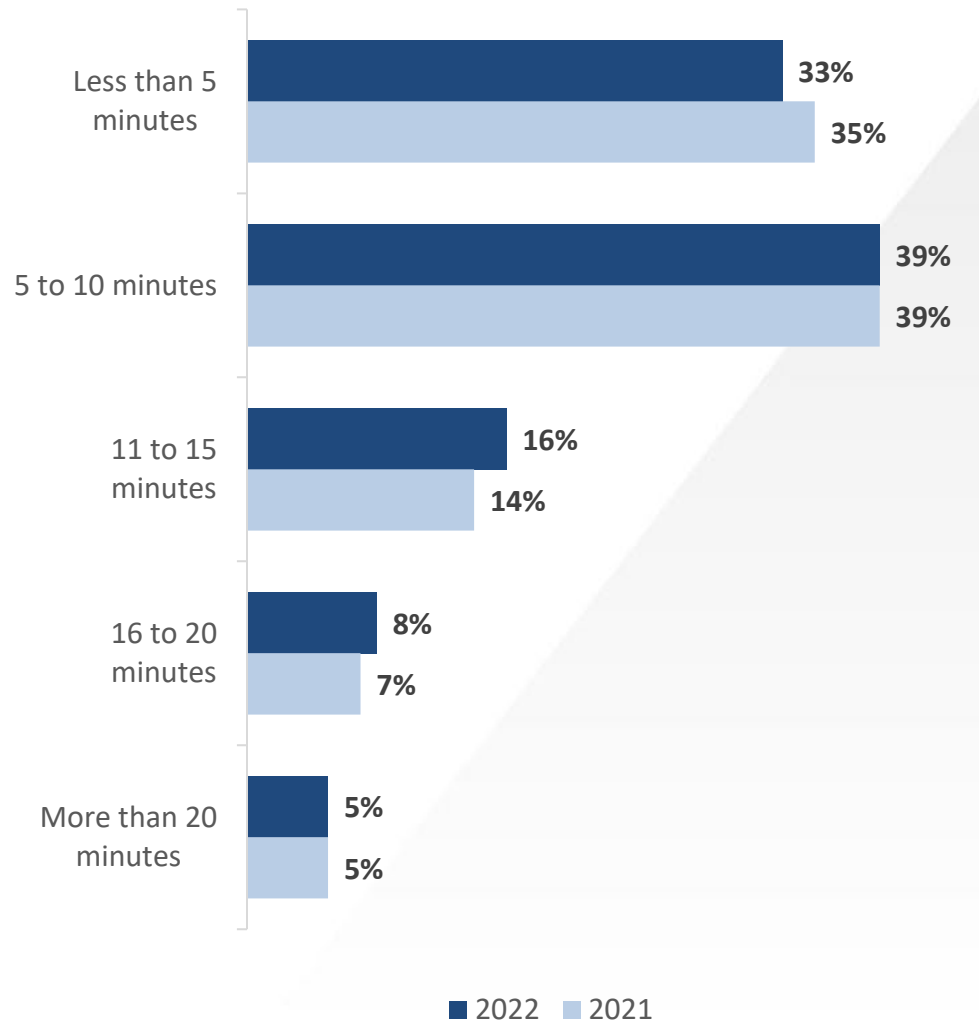
# TIME SPENT AT DEPOT

Q6. Approximately how long did you spend in the depot (or waiting in the drive-thru) for this visit?

- Nearly three quarters of customers say they spent 10 minutes or less at the depot during their recent visit, including one third who visited for less than five minutes.

## Demographic insights:

- Those who visited depots in urban or rural areas were less likely than those at metro locations to say that their visit took less than five minutes.
- Customers ages 65 and older were more likely than younger respondents to report being at the depot for less than 10 minutes.



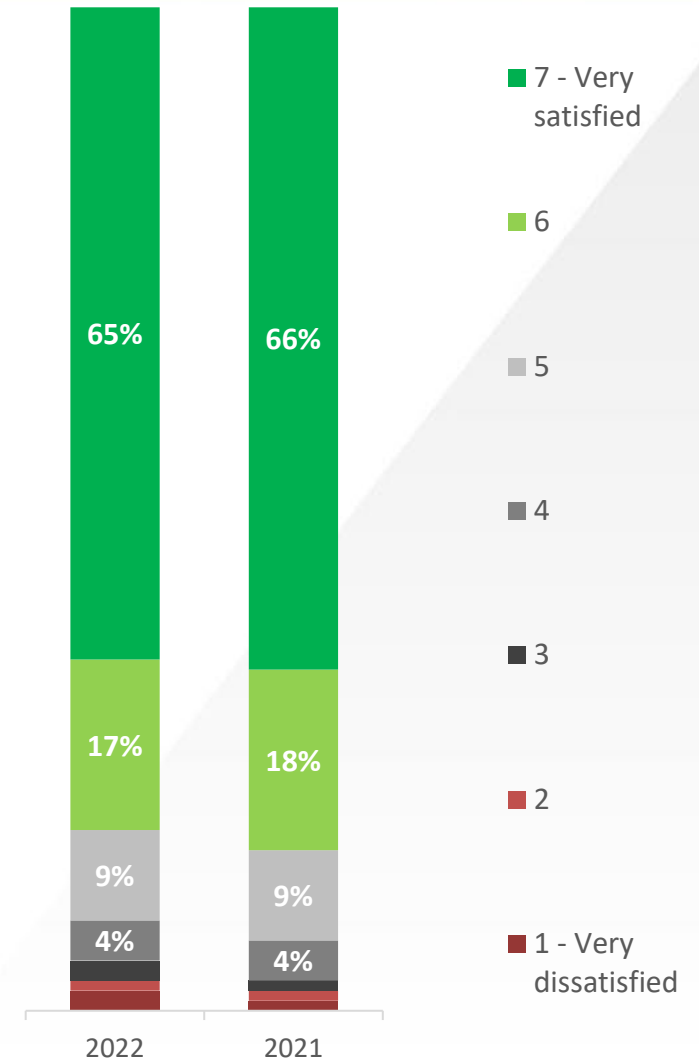
# SATISFACTION WITH TIME SPENT AT DEPOT

Q5. Using a scale of 1 to 7, where 1 is very dissatisfied and 7 is very satisfied, how satisfied or dissatisfied are you with the amount of time you spent in the depot, from the time you entered the depot to the time you received your refund?

- Generally, depot customers were satisfied with the amount of time they spent at the depot, including two thirds who were very satisfied. Similar to time spent at the depot, these results are virtually unchanged from last year.
- As would be expected, there is a negative correlation between time spent at the depot and satisfaction with time spent, as 91% of customers who were at the depot less than five minutes were satisfied, compared to just 39% of those who were at the depot for over 20 minutes.

## Demographic insights:

- Customers 65 and older were most likely to be satisfied with the amount of time spent in the depot, while those under 18 were least likely.
- It is interesting to note that satisfaction levels are similar among those who visited metro area depots compared to those who visited urban or rural locations, given the disparity in time spent at the depot.



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# RECEIVING PAYMENT

Q7. Did you receive your refund payment on the same day you returned your beverage containers?  
Q8. How many days did it take to receive your payment?\*

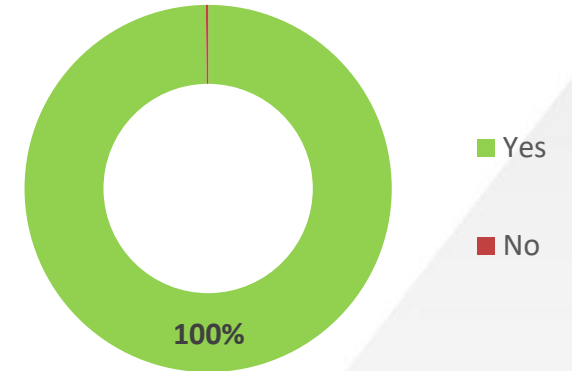
Q9. What type of payment did you receive?

- Virtually all depot customers reported receiving their payment on the day they made returns, with only three customers reporting otherwise.
- These three customers reported receiving their payments either the next day, three days or later, or more than three days later.
- The majority of customers received cash payments, while about one quarter received ATM tickets and only two received payment by e-transfer.

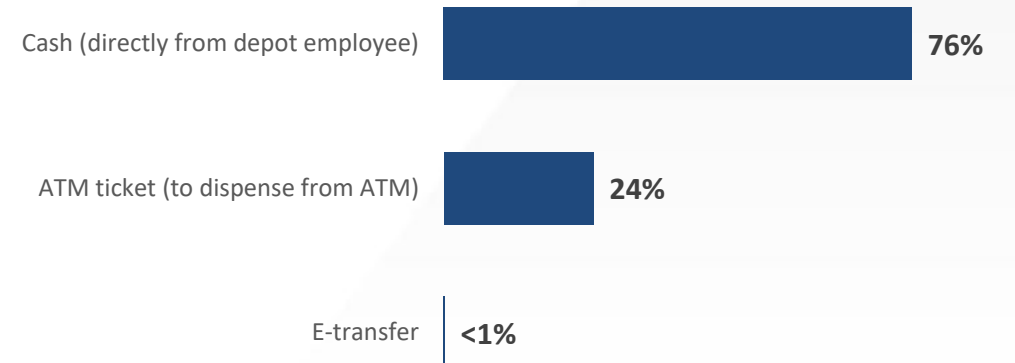
## Demographic insights:

- Customers who visited depots in rural areas were much more likely than their counterparts to receive cash payments versus ATM tickets.

Received payment same day



Type of payment



# RETURN AMOUNT AND ACCURACY

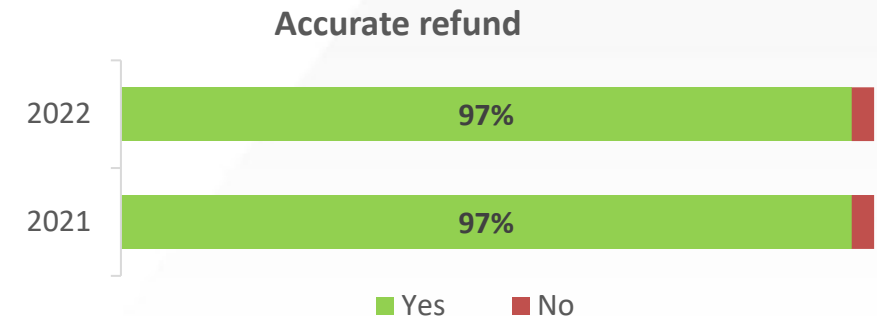
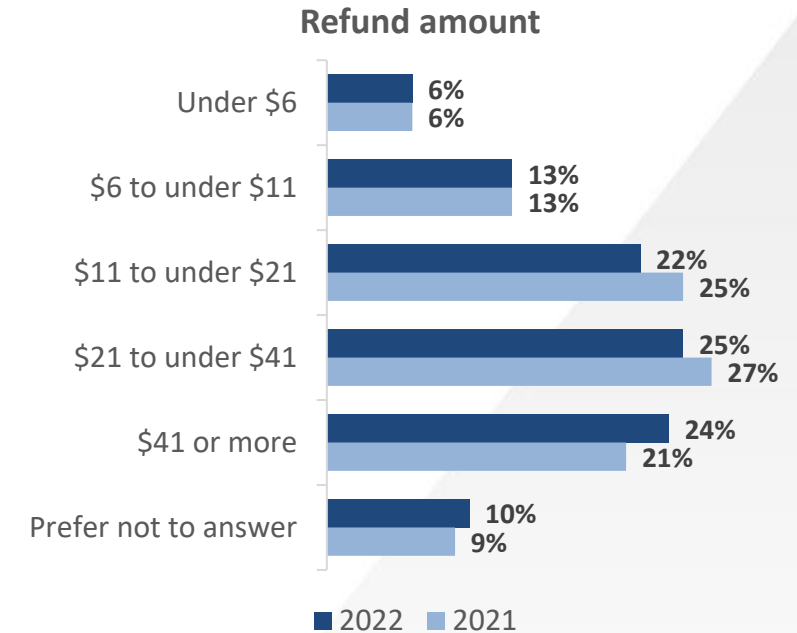
Q10. Approximately how much did you receive for a refund during this visit?

Q11. Do you believe your refund was accurate?

- The majority of depot customers received a refund of at least \$11, with an overall average of about \$36, which is slightly higher than the average of \$32 in 2021.
- Nearly all depot customers claim that their received refund amount was accurate, with no change from last year.

## Demographic insights:

- Customers over 65 years of age, those living in an apartment or condo, and those who visited depots in metro areas were more likely than their counterparts to report smaller refund amounts.





# RETURNING AND DESTINATION DEPOT VISITS

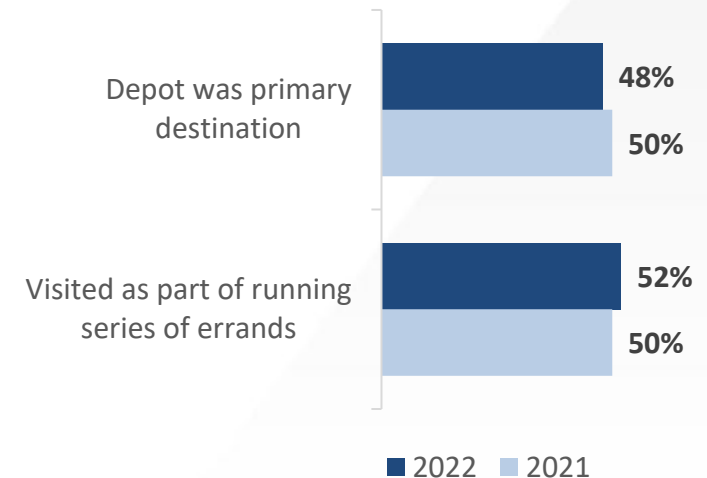
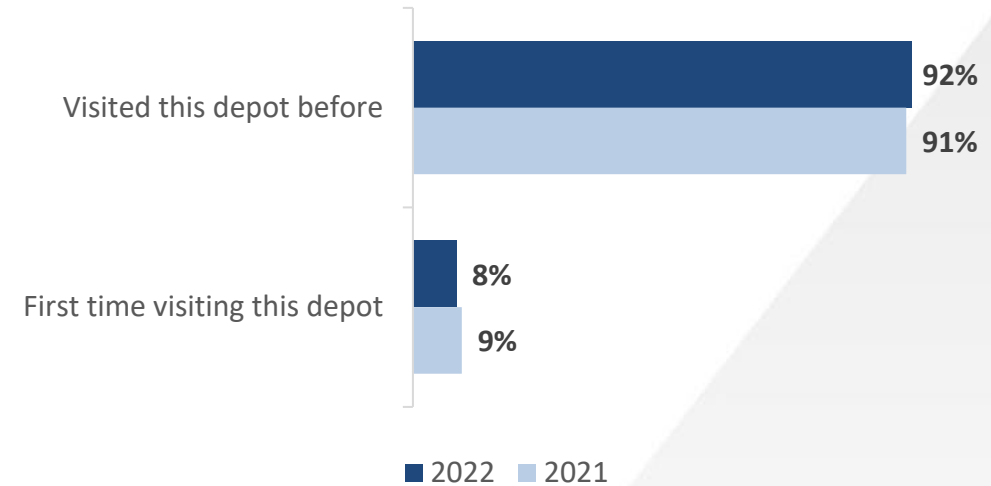
Q12. Was this your first time visiting this depot location?

Q14. Which of the following best describes your visit to this depot?

- Similar to results from 2021, the vast majority of customers visited a depot that they had been to before.
- There was a nearly even split between those visiting the depot as their primary destination and those visiting as part of a series of errands, with a slight majority reporting the latter.

## Demographic insights:

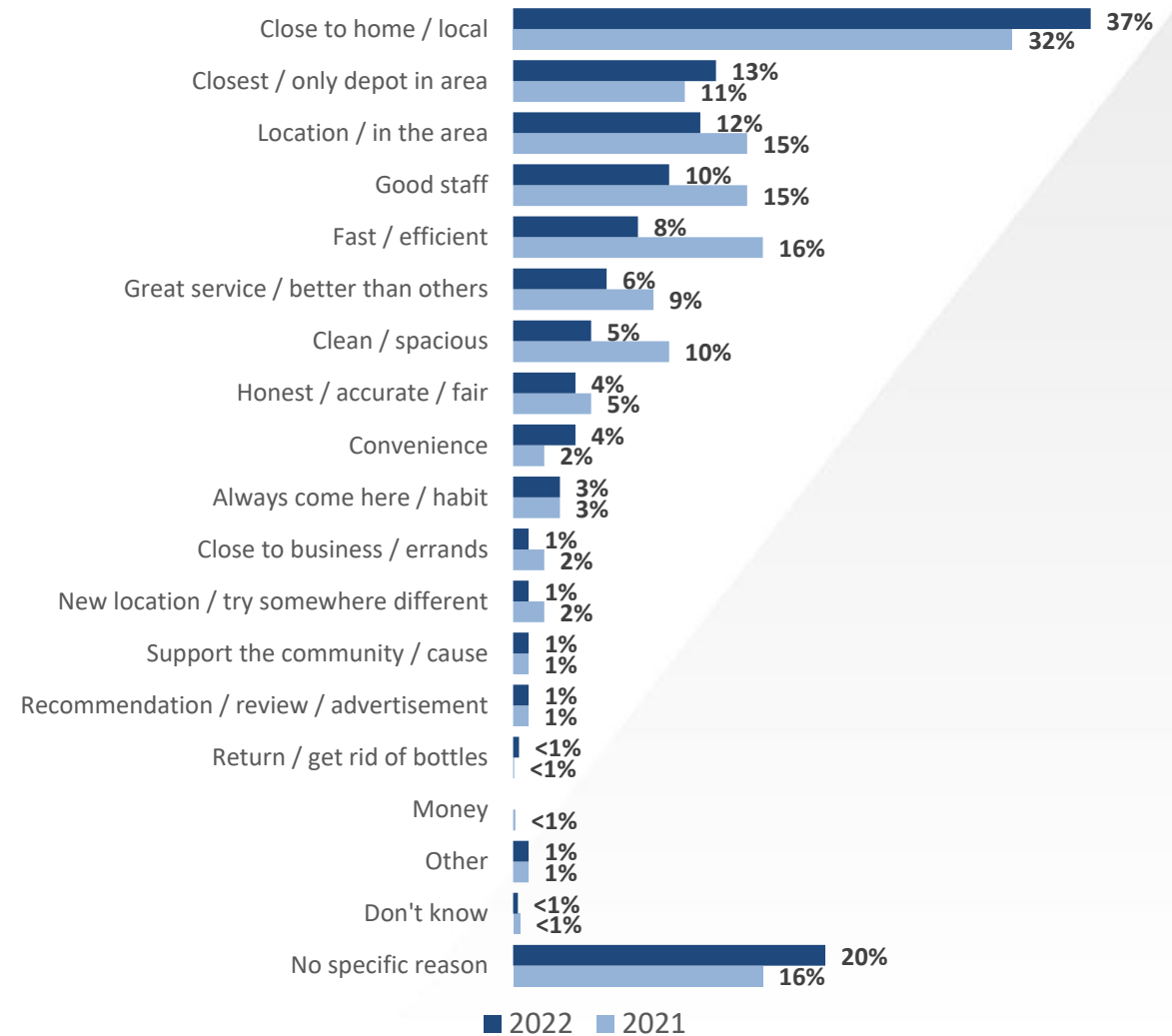
- Those 18 to 29 years of age and those visiting metro depots were more likely than their counterparts to say that they were visiting a depot location for the first time.
- Those under 18 were most likely to say visiting the depot was their primary destination.



# REASON FOR VISIT

Q13. Why did you choose to visit this specific depot?

- When asked why customers went to the specific depot they visited, over one third claimed it was because it was *close to home*.
- Other common reasons were because the depot is the *closest one*, the *location*, and the *staff*.
- Compared to last year, respondents this year tended to be more likely to mention aspects around depot location. This makes sense given that rural area depots were not included in the 2021 study, and those who visited rural depots were more likely to say the depot was *closest to them/only one in the area*.



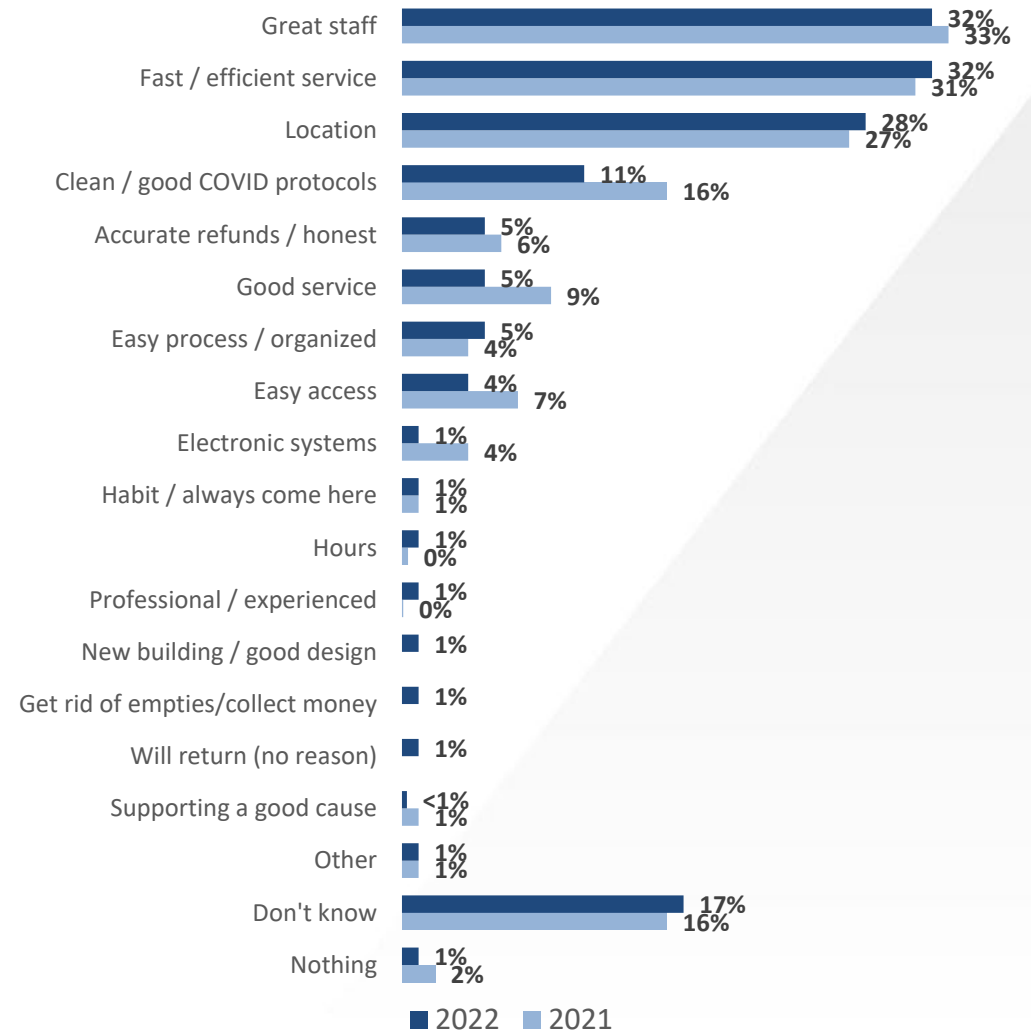
# REASON FOR RETURNING

Q15. What do you like about this particular depot that would make you likely to return?

- Respondents most commonly mentioned the *staff, fast/efficient service, and location* as reasons why they are likely to return to the depot they recently visited.

## Demographic insights:

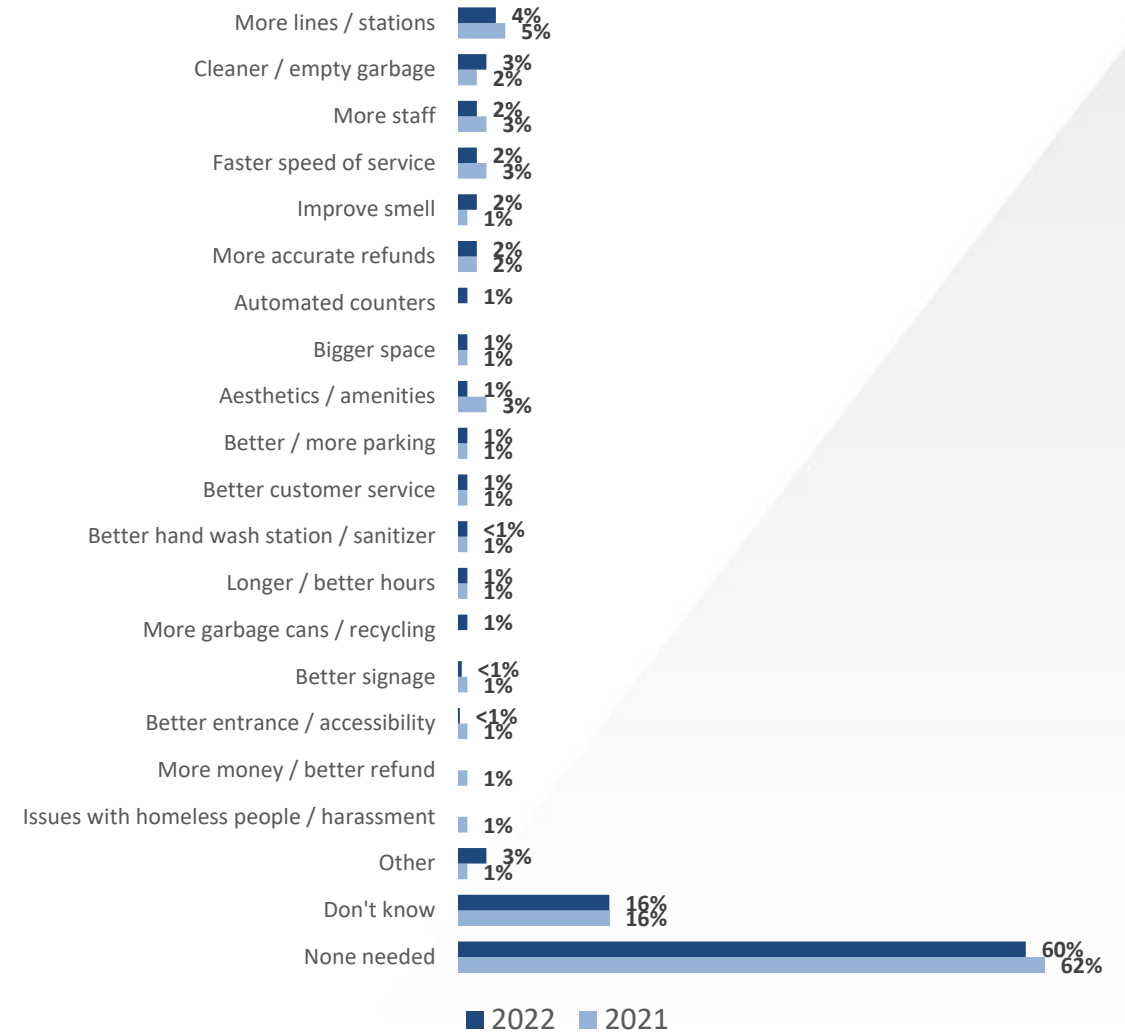
- Similar to reasons for visiting, as age increases, so does the likelihood of depot customers mentioning *great staff* or *fast/efficient service* as a reason they would return to the depot they recently visited.



# SUGGESTIONS FOR IMPROVEMENT

Q16. What, if anything, do you think this depot could do to improve?

- When asked what improvements could be made to their recently visited depot, there was very little consensus among respondents, with the most common suggestion being *more lines/stations* (4% of customers).
- Of note, 76% of customers said that no improvements were needed or that they were unable to suggest any.
- Overall, there are only slight changes from the previous year's results.



# OVERALL SATISFACTION

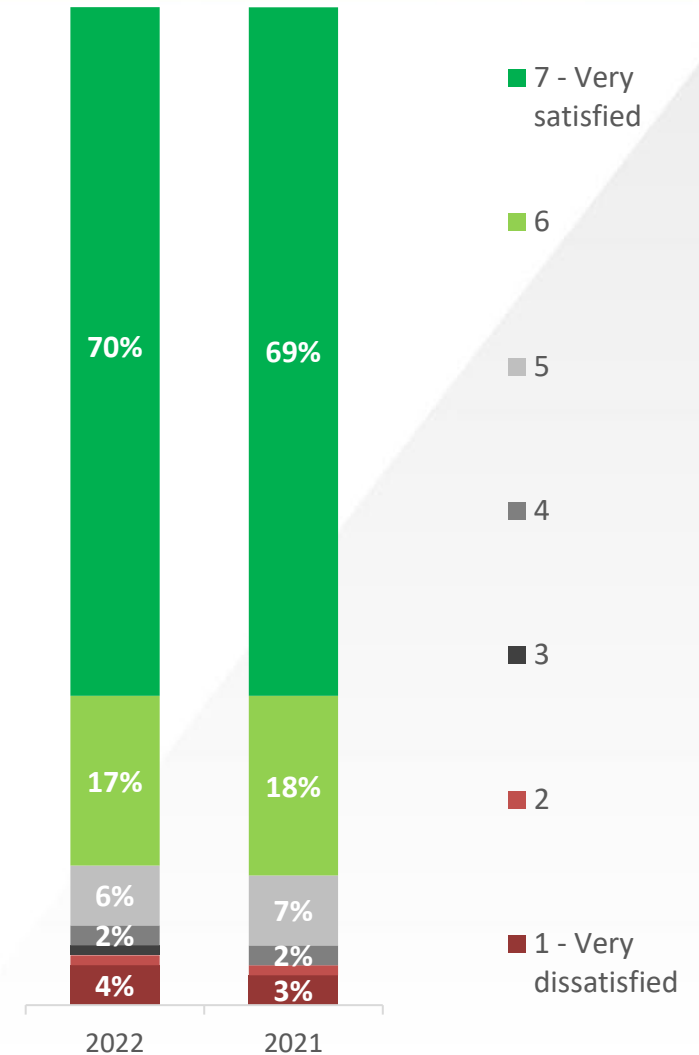
# OVERALL SATISFACTION WITH DEPOT

Q4. Using a scale of 1 to 7, where 1 is very dissatisfied and 7 is very satisfied, how would you rate your overall experience with the depot you recently visited?

- Overall, depot customers tended to be satisfied with their recent depot visit, with over two thirds of customers saying they were very satisfied. These results are virtually identical to last year.
- Satisfaction with time spent at the depot appears to be highly correlated with overall satisfaction, as 95% of those satisfied with their time spent at the depot were also satisfied with their overall visit. In comparison, only 9% of those dissatisfied with their time spent at the depot were still satisfied with their overall visit.

## Demographic insights:

- Customers 65 and older were most likely to be satisfied with their recent visit, while those under 18 were least likely.



# OTHER DEPOT EXPERIENCES

# ISSUES WITH RETURNS

Q27. Have you ever brought back a container to a depot that the depot worker would not accept?

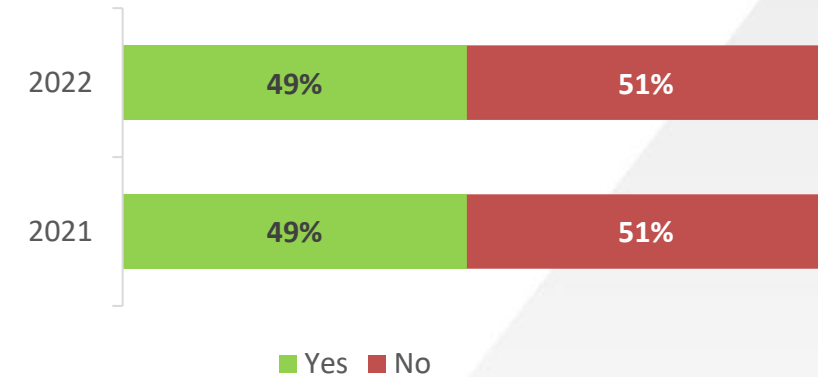
Q28. Did the depot worker explain why they could not accept the container?\*

- About half of customers claim to have brought back a container to a depot that would not be accepted, which is unchanged from the previous year.
- About 84% of those who brought back a container the depot would not accept were given a reason why, which is up from 78% in 2021.

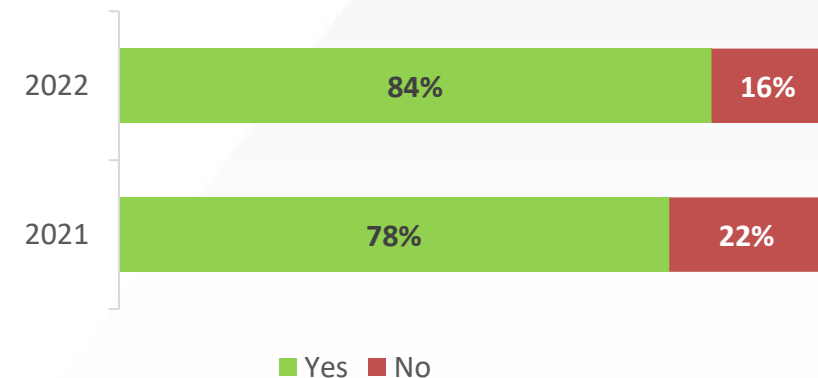
## Demographic insights:

- Generally, as age increases, the likelihood of having experienced being unable to return a beverage container that they brought back increases.
- Respondents under 45 and those visiting metro location depots were less likely to be given a reason for their unaccepted returns.

### Unaccepted returns



### Reason given





# FRUSTRATION WITH UNACCEPTED RETURNS

Q39. Have you ever been frustrated with a depot for not accepting a container you tried to bring back?

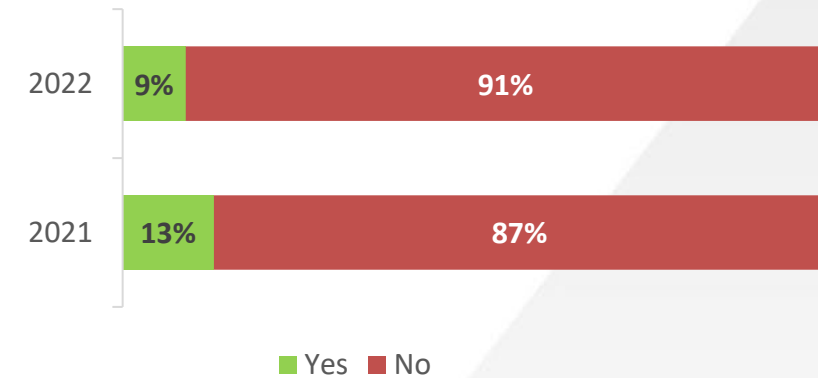
Q40. Can you provide an example of the container that caused the frustration?\*

- Only about 1 in 10 respondents say that they have been frustrated with a depot for not accepting a container for return, a slight drop from 2021 results.
- Those frustrated most often mentioned that the containers they tried to return were *non-beverage containers* or *non-beverage Tetra Paks*.

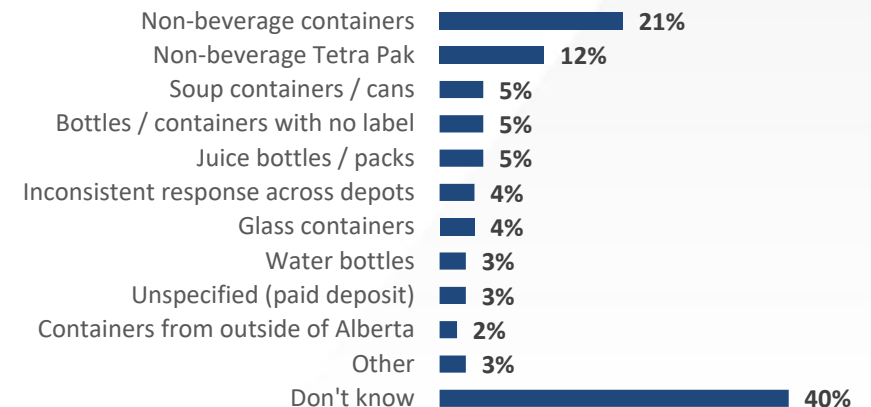
## Demographic insights:

- Results showed no statistical differences between groups.

### Frustrated with unaccepted containers



### Type of unaccepted containers



# CONTAINERS WITHOUT LABELS

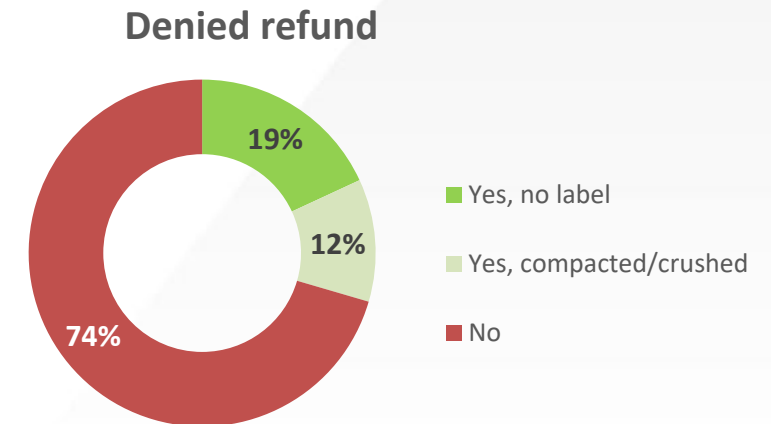
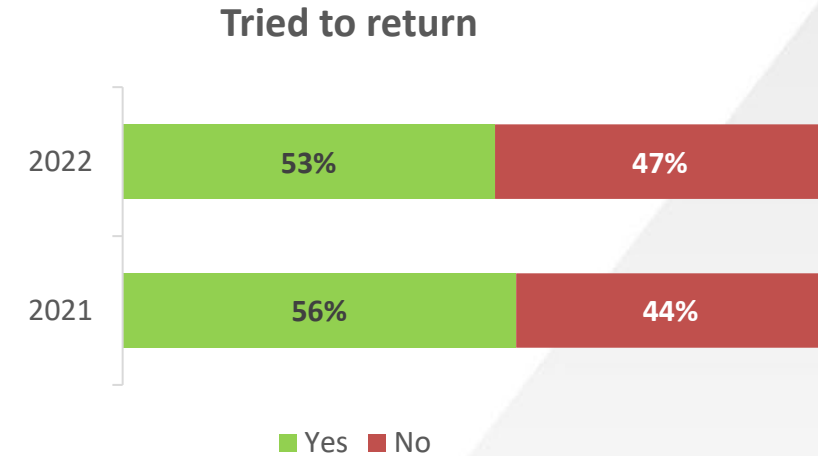
Q34. Have you ever tried to return a beverage container to a depot that did not have a label or that was compacted/crushed?

Q35. Have you ever been denied a refund for a container that did not have a label or that was compacted/crushed?\*

- Similar to 2021, just over half of recent depot customers have brought back a container for a refund that either did not have a label or was compacted/crushed.
- About 74% of these respondents say that the container they brought back was accepted for a refund, which is lower than the 88% reported the previous year.

## Demographic insights:

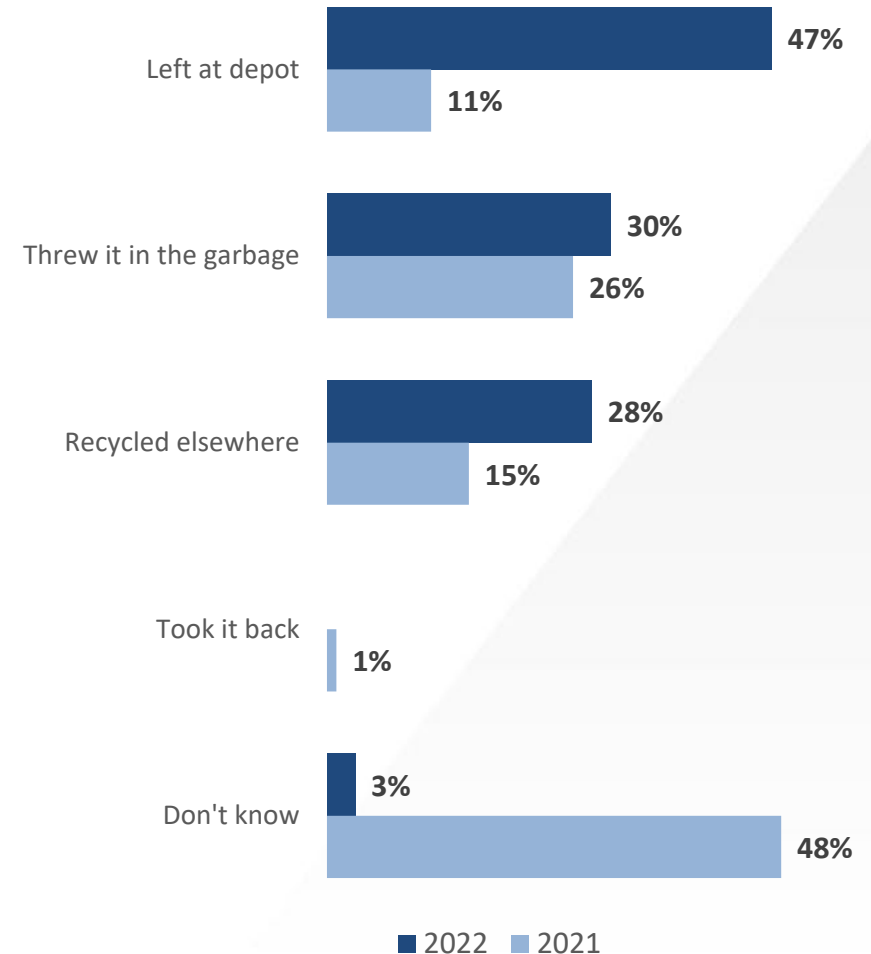
- Those living in an apartment or condo and those visiting metro area depots were less likely than their counterparts to say that they have tried returning a compacted container or one without a label.



# CONTAINERS WITHOUT LABELS

Q36. What did you do with the container(s) you were not able to get a refund for?\*

- Of those who did not get a refund for a container they tried to bring back, nearly half say they *left it at the depot*, while 30% *threw it in the garbage* and 28% *recycled it elsewhere*.
- There are some changes in results from the previous year, however, in 2021 nearly half of respondents were unsure or did not provide a response.

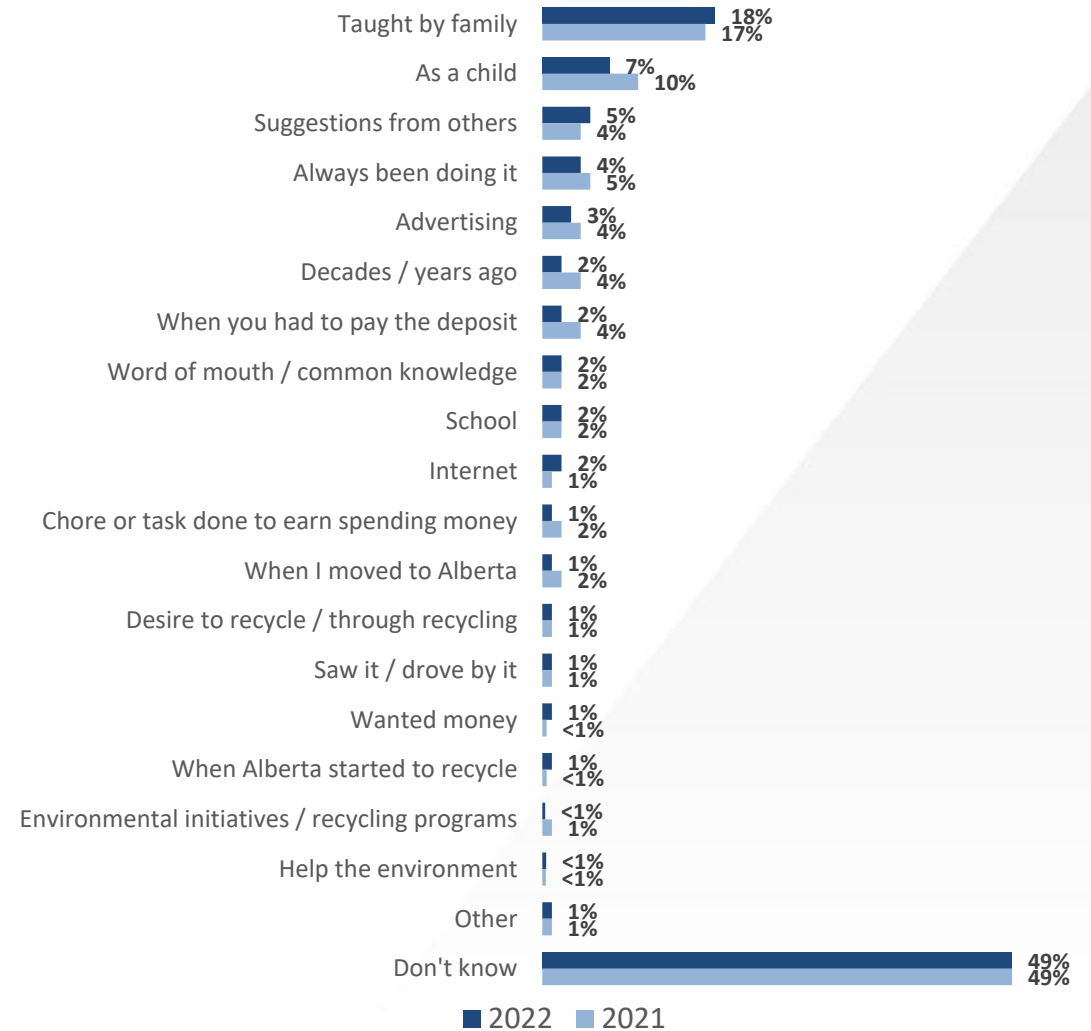


**AWARENESS**

# KNOWLEDGE OF RECYCLING DEPOTS

Q18. How did you first learn to take containers back to a depot?

- Only half of depot customers were able to provide a response to how they first learned to take empty containers back to a depot. It appears that most have known to do so for a long time, as the most common answers (*taught by family, as a child, always been doing it*) are of a similar theme.
- These results vary little from 2021 results.



# LOGO AWARENESS

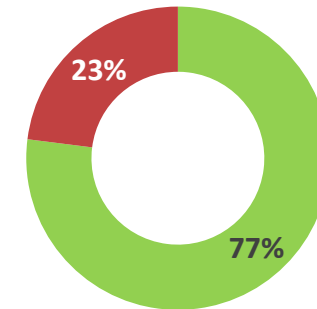
Q19. Do you recall seeing this logo during your recent visit to the depot?\*

Q20. Where do you recall seeing this logo? \*\*

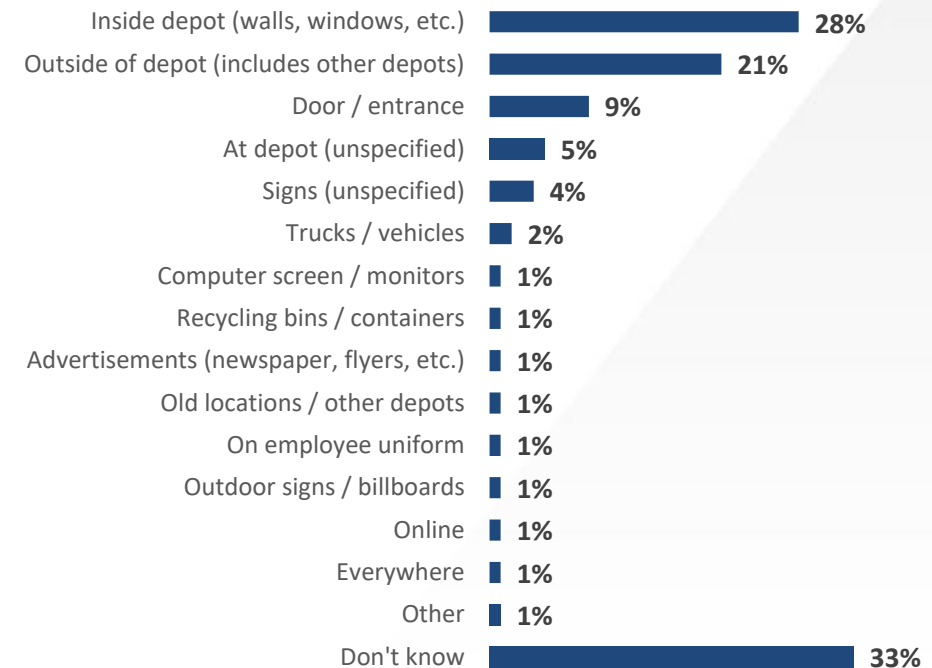
- Overall, about three quarters of customers who recently visited a recycling depot say that they recall seeing the recycling depot logo.
- Those who recall seeing the logo most often remember seeing it somewhere *inside (walls, windows, tills, etc.)* or *outside the depot*.
- About one third of those who recall seeing the logo were unsure where they saw it.

## Demographic insights:

- As age increases, the likelihood of customers recalling seeing the logo decreases.
- Additionally, those visiting depots in urban locations were more likely to notice the logo than those at metro or rural locations.



■ Recall seeing logo  
■ Did not see logo



# ALBERTA DEPOT REGULATIONS

Q29. Did you know that all depots in Alberta are regulated?

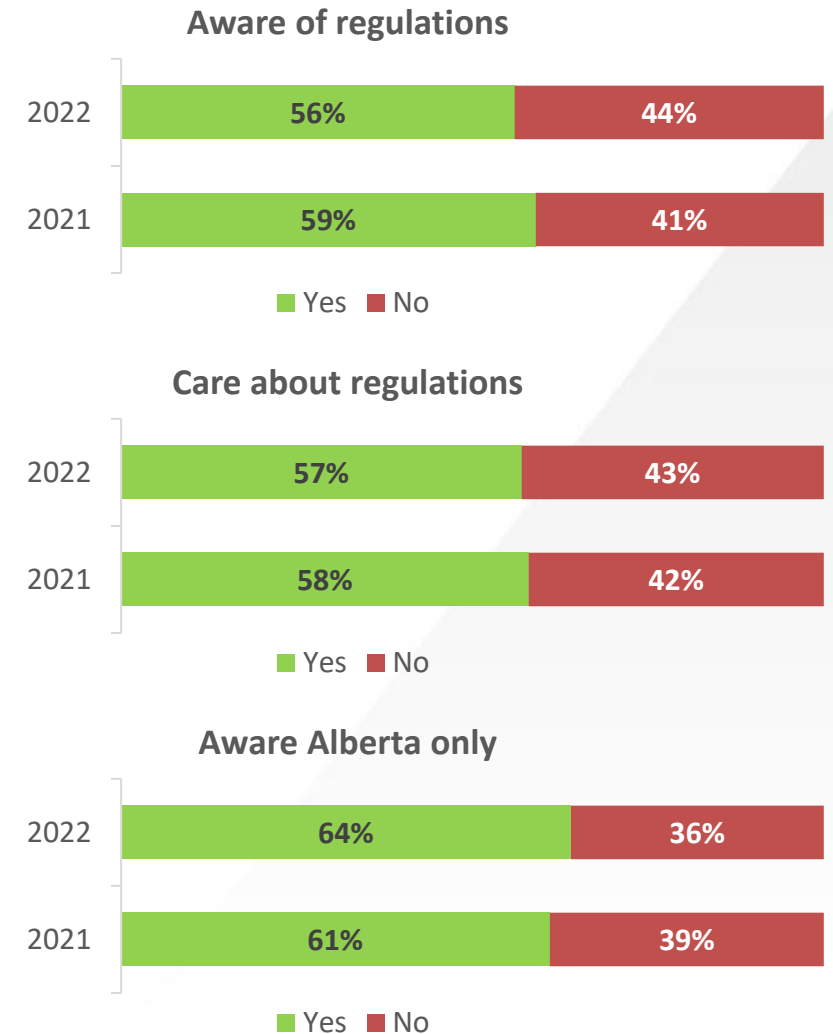
Q30. Does it make a difference to you whether depots are regulated or not?

Q31. Are you aware that only beverage containers purchased in Alberta are eligible to be returned to an Alberta depot for a refund?

- Over half of recent depot customers claim to be aware that all depots in Alberta are regulated and a near identical proportion of respondents say that depots being regulated makes a difference to them.
- Nearly two thirds say that they are aware that only containers purchased in the province can be returned for a refund at an Alberta depot.
- There are only slight changes in these proportions compared to the previous year's results.

## Demographic insights:

- Women and those visiting urban area depots are less likely than their counterparts to say they are aware depots are regulated, while older respondents and those who visited metro area depots are most likely to care.
- Those who visited rural area depots are most likely to say they are aware that only containers purchased in the province are eligible for refund at an Alberta depot.



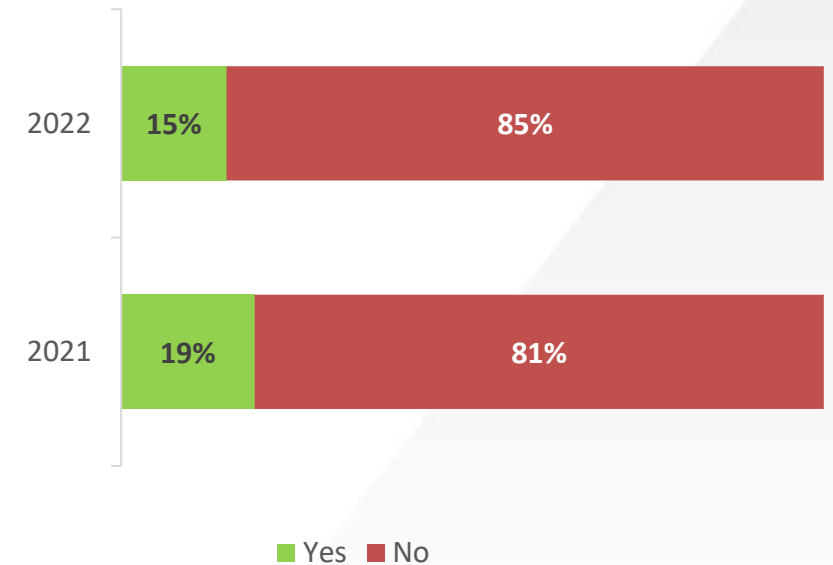
# AWARENESS OF ELIGIBLE CONTAINERS

Q37. Do you find it difficult to differentiate which types of containers are eligible for a refund?

- The majority of respondents say that they do not have difficulties differentiating which types of containers are eligible for a refund, and results show a slight increase in this proportion from last year.

## Demographic insights:

- Those mostly likely to have trouble differentiating containers eligible for a refund are those living in multi-family homes or an apartment or condo, and those in metro areas.





# **CUSTOMER PREFERENCES AND BEHAVIOURS**

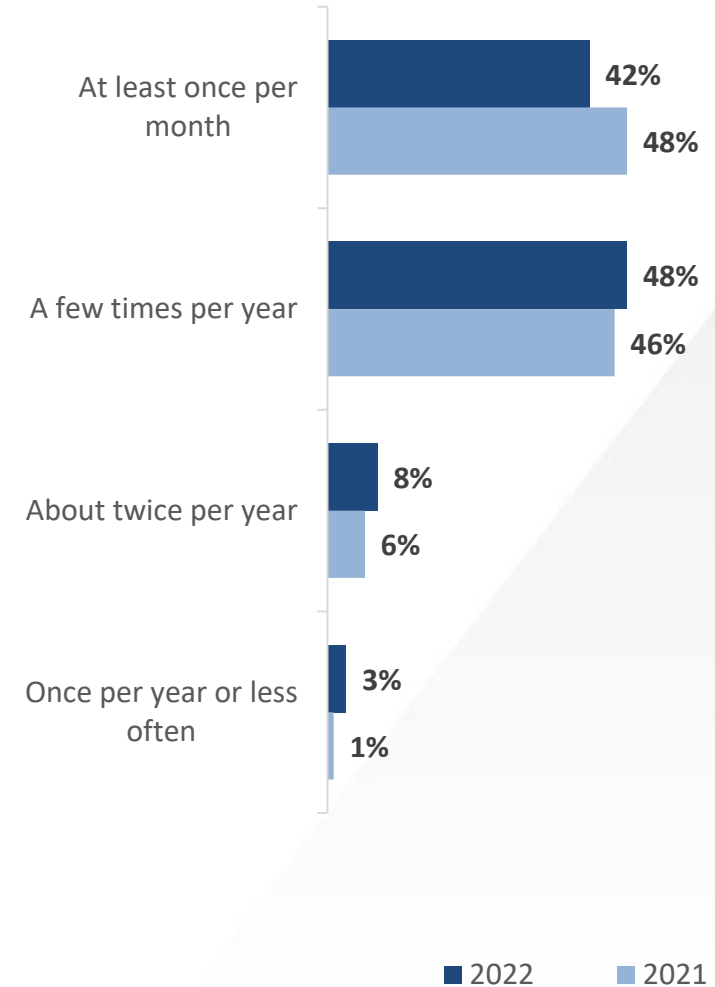
# FREQUENCY OF DEPOT VISITS

Q17. Thinking about a typical year, how often would you say you visit any recycling depot to return beverage containers?

- About 4 in 10 respondents say that they visit a recycling depot to return beverage containers *at least once per month*, while the majority of the remaining respondents say that they visit *a few times per year*.
- The proportion who visit most frequently is down slightly from the previous year.

## Demographic insights:

- Those whose primary residence is an apartment or condo are much more likely than those in other types of dwellings to return beverage containers to a depot *at least once per month*, likely due to having less room for storage.



# BEVERAGE CONTAINER COLLECTION SERVICE

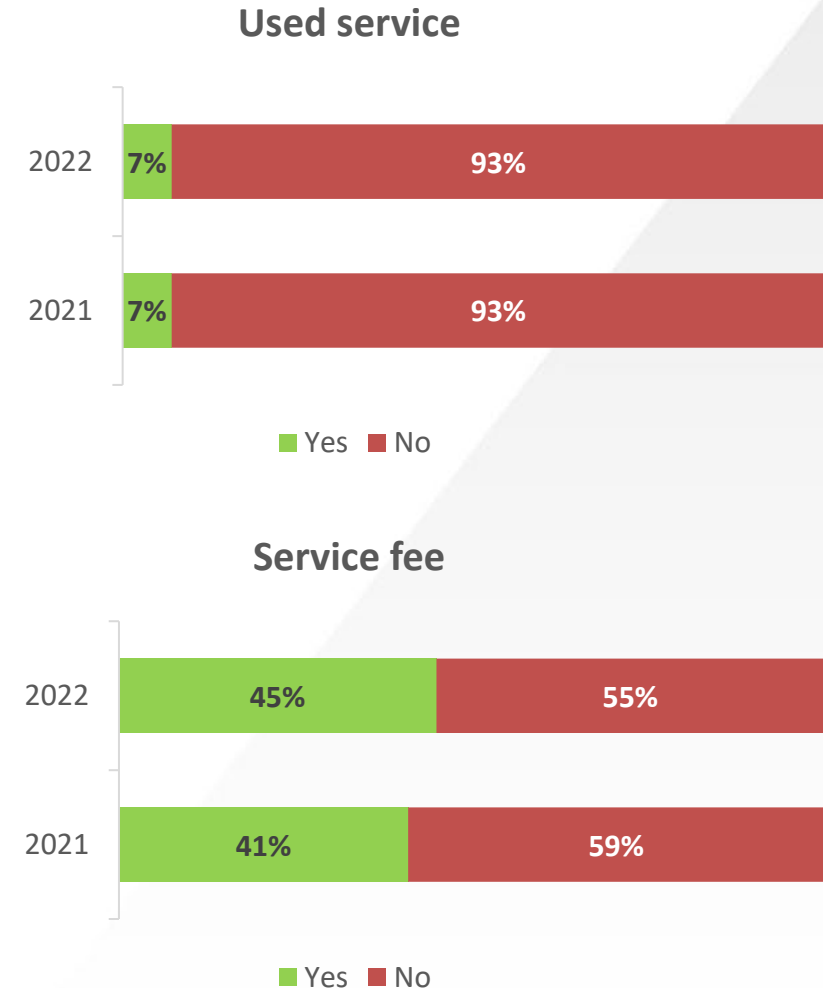
Q21. Have you ever used a beverage container collection service rather than returning the containers to a depot yourself?

Q22. Was there a service fee associated with the collection?\*

- Only a small proportion of those who recently visited a recycling depot say that they have used a beverage container collection service rather than returning containers to a depot. This proportion has not changed since the 2021 survey.
- Of those who have used such a service, 45% say that there was a fee associated with the collection, which is up slightly from 41% the previous year.

## Demographic insights:

- Those ages 13 to 17 are most likely to report having used a beverage container collection service.

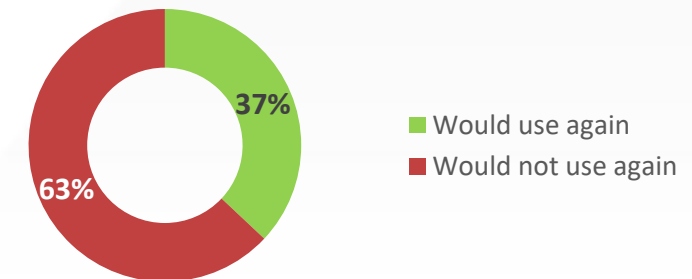
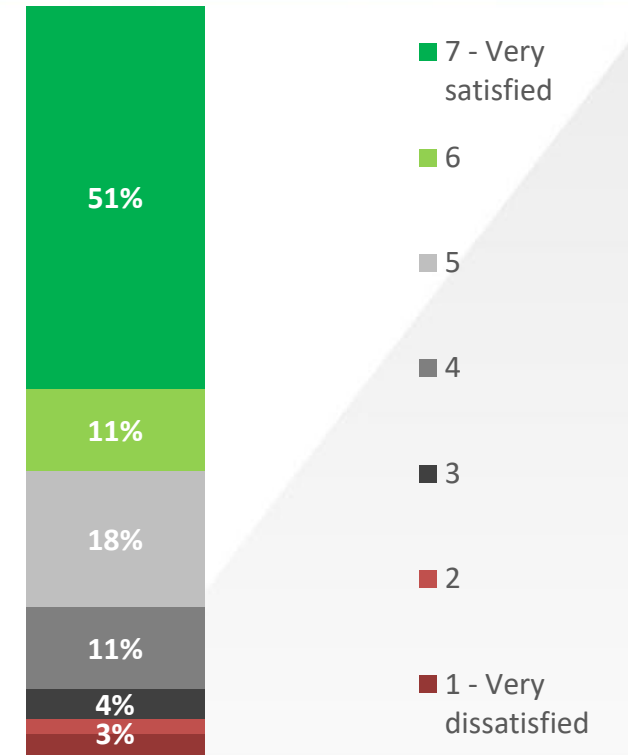


# SATISFACTION WITH COLLECTION SERVICE

Q23. How satisfied were you with the collection service?

Q24. In the future, would you choose to use a collection service again rather than go to a depot yourself?

- Nearly two thirds of customers who have used a beverage container collection service were satisfied (rating of 6 or 7 out of 7) with the service.
- Despite the majority being satisfied, just over one third of respondents say they would use the service again rather than going to a depot themselves.
- What is interesting to note is that those who paid a service fee for this collection service (59%) were more likely than those who did not pay a fee (41%) to say they would use the service again in the future.



# BEVERAGE CONTAINER DROP-OFF SERVICE

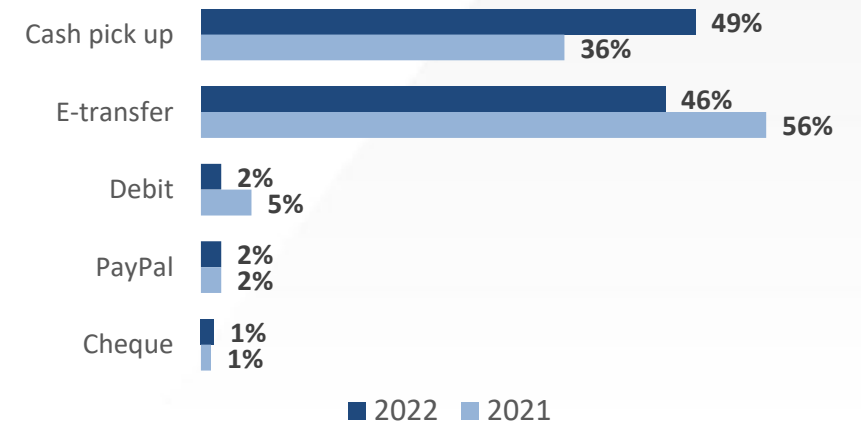
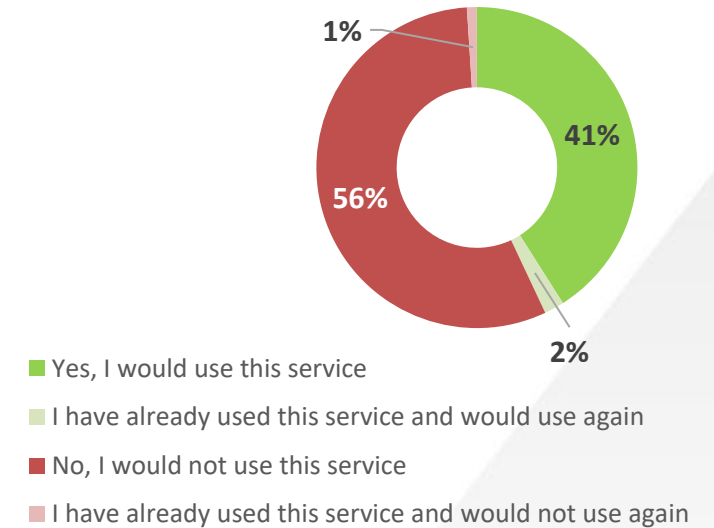
Q25. If a service was offered where you could drop off your containers without waiting in line and collect your money later, would you use this service?\*

Q26. What would your preferred form of payment be? \*\*

- About 43% of recent depot customers say that they would use a service where they could drop off containers immediately and collect money later, including 2% who have already used this service and would use it again. This similarly compares to 41% who said they would use this service in the 2021 survey.
- Preference for *cash pick up* (49%) is higher in 2022 among those who would use a drop-off service compared to 36% in 2021, while preference for *e-transfer* has dropped (from 56% the previous year to 46%).

## Demographic insights:

- Generally, as age increases, respondents are less likely to say that they would use a drop-off service.



# WILLINGNESS TO TRAVEL TO DEPOTS

Q32. If you did not have a depot in your local community, or a close neighbouring community, and there were no beverage container collection services available in your area, what would you do with your beverage containers?\*

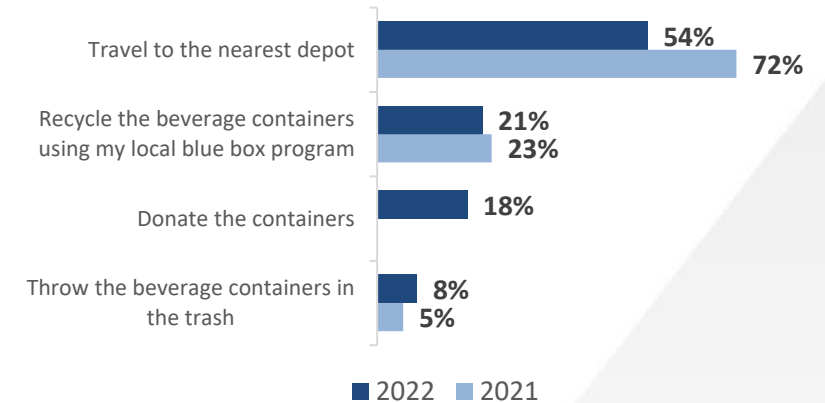
Q33. How far would you be willing to travel to return your beverage containers to a depot?

- Over half of respondents say that they would be willing to *travel to the nearest depot* to return beverage containers if there were no recycling depots near them compared to just 8% who would *throw them in the trash*.
- About half of respondents would be willing to travel up to 20 km to a depot, while about 20% say that they would be willing to travel further.

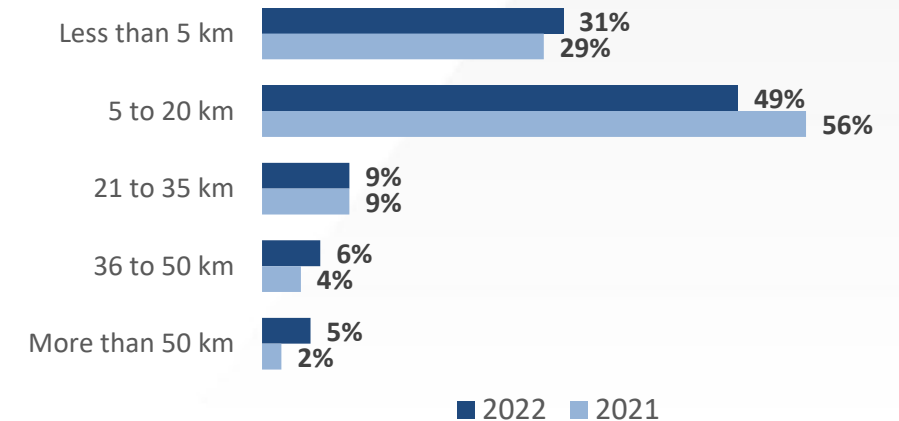
## Demographic insights:

- Generally, those in rural areas are more likely to be willing to travel further distances to a recycling depot, while those in metro areas are least likely to be willing to travel more than 5 kilometres.

### Disposal of containers



### Distance willing to travel



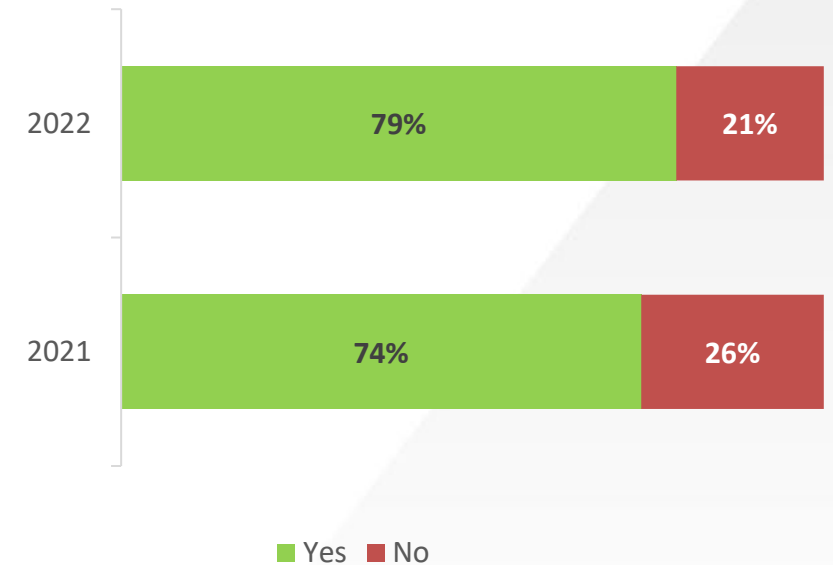
# PREFERENCE FOR EXPANDED ELIGIBILITY

Q38. Would you like to see a deposit placed on more types of containers so that you can bring them back to a depot to be recycled?

- About 79% of recent depot customers are in favour of placing a deposit on more types of containers so that they can be recycled at a depot, which is up from 74% the previous year.

## Demographic insights:

- Results show no statistical differences between groups.



# DEPOT MODERNIZATION



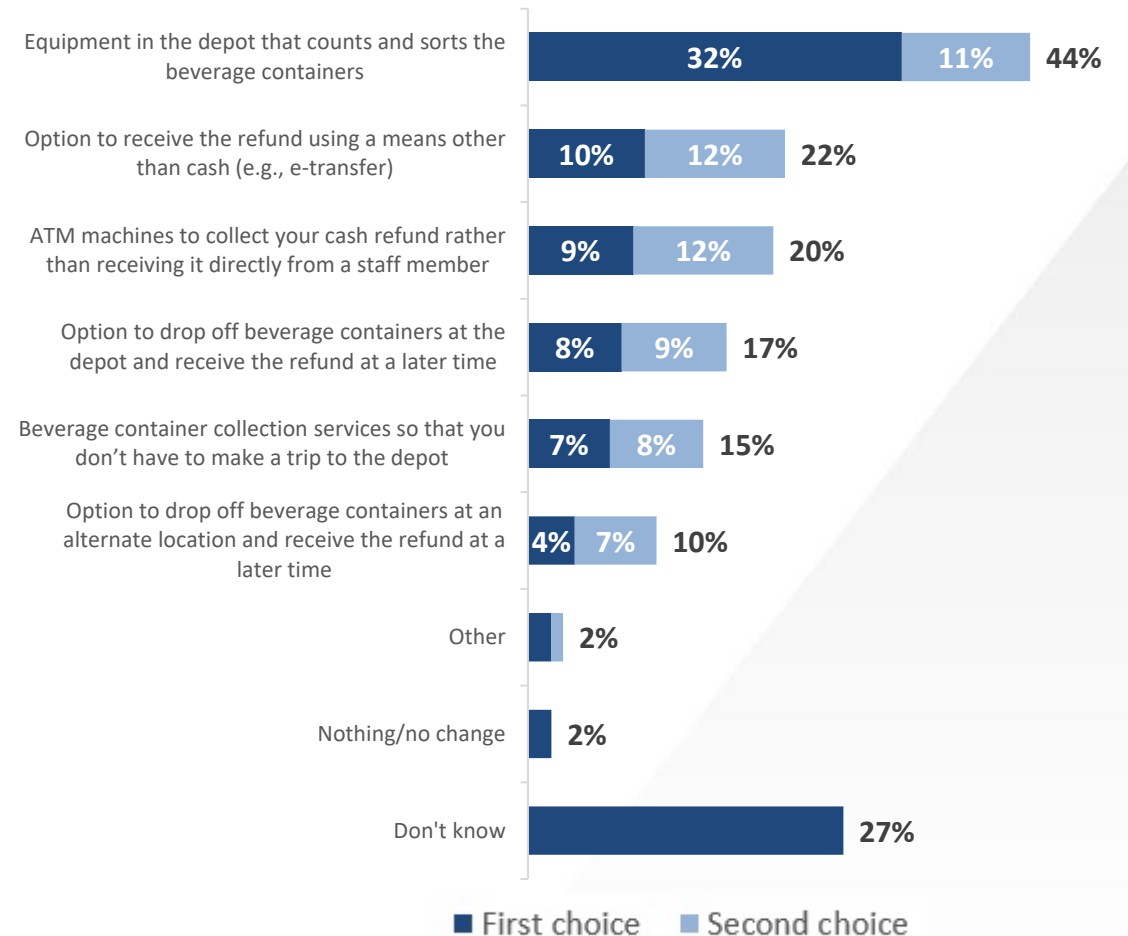
# PREFERENCES FOR DEPOT MODERNIZATION

Q41. Which of the following would you like to see offered to help modernize returns to depots?

- In terms of changes depot customers would like to see offered to help modernize returns to depots, the most commonly preferred change would be to add *equipment that counts and sorts beverage containers*.
- This is followed by *options to receive refunds by means other than cash and ATM machines to collect cash refunds instead of directly from a depot employee*.

## Demographic insights:

- Respondents 45 and older were least likely to provide any response, possibly indicating they do not wish to see changes to help modernize returns to depots.



# BOTTLE DEPOT MODERNIZATION IN ALBERTA

Q42. Based on your experience with Alberta bottle depots, please rate where you believe the depot industry is in terms of modernization.

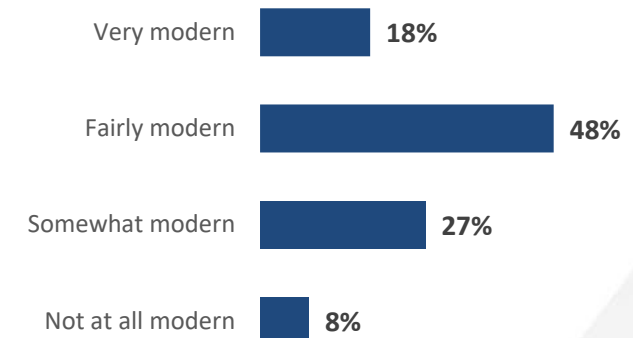
Q43. As compared other industries that you've experienced (such as banking, grocery/meal and parcel deliveries, etc.), please rate how you believe the depot industry compares in terms of modernization.

- In terms of how modern depot customers believe the Alberta depot industry to be, about half say it is *fairly modern*, while about one third say it is *somewhat or not at all modern*.
- Although 18% feel the Alberta depot industry is *very modern*, only 7% say they believe it to be *more modern* than other industries.
- Generally, respondents are equally likely to say the Alberta depot industry is *as modern or not as modern* as other industries.

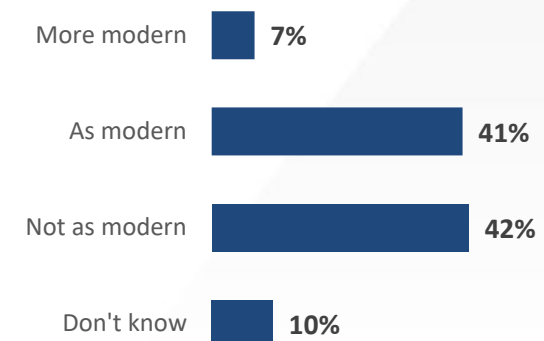
## Demographic insights:

- Those visiting rural depots are most likely to believe the depot industry is *somewhat or not at all modern*, and *not as modern* as other industries.

### Alberta depot industry



### Comparison to other industries

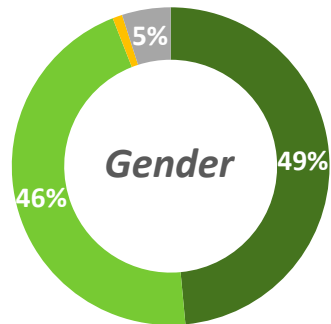


# APPENDIX A



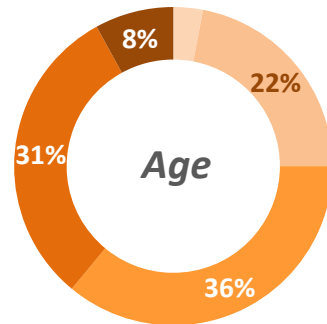
# DEMOGRAPHIC PROFILE OF CUSTOMERS

49% Male



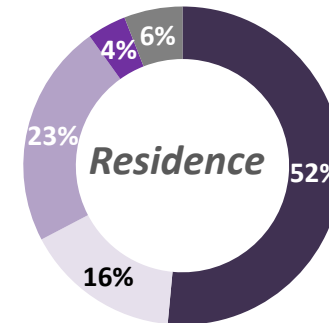
- Male
- Female
- Other
- No response

36% 30 to 44



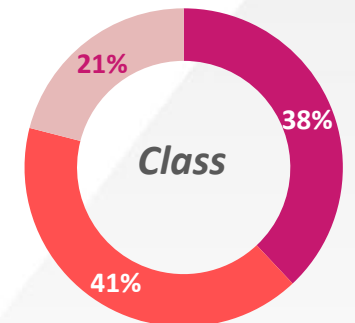
- 13 to 17
- 18 to 29
- 30 to 44
- 45 to 64
- 65 and older

52% Single-family home



- Single-family detached house
- Multi-family home
- Apartment or condo
- Other
- No response

41% Metro



- Urban
- Metro
- Rural