

Return Labels (Reverse Logistics)

In this fast-paced world of online shopping, we all order fun stuff from Amazon and other retailers. When the color or size may not be quite right, it needs to make that return trip back to them for a refund.

Many savvy shoppers do one of two things to get their orders back in the hands of the sellers. They either make that trip down to the post office to process the shipment or even better: print a return label online. If you're like us here at ShipEngine, free time is nearly non-existent these days in our schedules so standing in line isn't ideal or fun.

That's where creating and printing return labels comes in handy. ShipEngine is here to make sure that even brand new API users can take advantage of the shipping discounts and cut the standing-in-line time down to zero. Consumer reverse logistics come in two forms here at ShipEngine. Keep reading to learn the ins and outs of becoming a pro at return labels.

[Get started right now creating your first return label.](#)

Sample Use Cases

There's many reasons why return labels are needed such as:

- It's a gift you'd like to exchange
- The product wasn't what you ordered
- A seller sent you blue when you bought pink
- An online retailer sent you broken stuff (not cool)
- The shipping carrier damaged the box and everything inside

your website. Your shipping department processes two labels for this order. The first label is used to send the phone to the customer as an outgoing label to be placed on the package.

The second label is created as a pre-paid return label which is included inside the package. If the customer suddenly decides a Samsung phone isn't quite as nice as the new iPhone, they can use the second label to return the Samsung phone to you for a refund.

Why do retailers bother with the pre-paid return label?

It's cheaper for them to create it in their shipping system. Plus customers love free returns. If the buyer is happy with their purchase, the label gets recycled along with the box (hopefully). There's no cost to the seller for unused return labels. Well, except if the carrier is the USPS. They charge the shipper once the label is created.

In this use case, there is an outgoing label and a return label.

Only a Return Label

Your smartphone business also buys used phones. So a customer finds your website and fills out the request for you to buy their ancient Motorola phone. Since they want the extra cash, they process the order for you to buy it.

Next, your store provides them with a return label to send the phone to your store. It's usually in the form of a web link to the return label the customer prints from their web browser. Some retailers also provide consumers with a return label file you can open and print.

In this use case, there is no outgoing label. Instead, there's only the need for a return label.

[Learn how to create a return label.](#)

our APIs. Or, contact a shipping expert for more info.

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