

DROPGATE · USER MANUAL

DropGate User Manual

Bypass-proof per-identity purchase limits for limited drops, enforced at checkout.

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Welcome to DropGate

DropGate makes sure one person cannot buy more than their share of a limited drop. It enforces per-customer limits at the checkout layer, where the usual cart and theme-script limits get bypassed, using a two-layer gate that closes the holes the other limit apps leave open.

It is honest about what it can and cannot do. DropGate stops cart edits, direct checkout links, guest checkout, the order-timing race, gmail aliases, and casual multi-account buying. It does not claim to stop a determined reseller with two real phone numbers and two shipping addresses. No app does that without hard ID checks, and DropGate does not pretend otherwise.

This manual covers setup, the two enforcement layers, the post-checkout action, scheduling, and the controls that let you trust it before a big drop.

How DropGate works (two layers)

- **Layer 1 runs before checkout.** A Shopify validation function checks the buyer against your limit and blocks the purchase right at checkout if it would go over. This is where cart edits and direct checkout links normally slip through, and where DropGate stops them.
- **Layer 2 runs after each order.** App webhooks recompute each buyer's true count across all of their linked accounts and orders, and reconcile anything that slipped past Layer 1 (a true simultaneous race, or a duplicate that shares a phone or address with an earlier order).

Together they close the gaps that single-layer “tag the customer after they buy” apps leave open.

Before you start

You need:

- A Shopify store running a limited release.
- The products for the drop identified (by tag, collection, or specific products).

You do not need theme code changes. DropGate enforces through Shopify's checkout, so there is nothing injected into your theme to break or clean up.

A two-minute setup

1. Open DropGate from your Shopify admin.
2. Create a campaign: choose the drop products, set the cap (units per customer), choose what happens if the cap is exceeded after checkout, and optionally turn on dry-run.
3. Save. DropGate installs its checkout validation and starts protecting the drop.

We strongly recommend running your first campaign in **dry-run** (below) before a live drop, so you can see what it would block without affecting any real checkout.

Creating a campaign

A campaign has these parts:

- **Drop group.** The products this limit covers, chosen by tag, collection, or specific products/variants.
- **Apply the cap to.** Whether the cap is **per product** (the default) or **per variant** (opt-in). See “Per product vs per variant” below.
- **Cap.** The maximum units of the drop group one customer may buy.

- **If the cap is exceeded after checkout.** Choose one of three actions: do nothing (checkout block only), cancel and refund the order, or hold for your review. See “If the cap is exceeded after checkout” below.
- **If over cap only by a shared shipping address.** A separate action for the weaker address signal: hold for your review (default), cancel and refund, or ignore shipping-address matches. See “When a duplicate slips through” below.
- **Require an account.** Block guest checkout on the drop so every buyer has a stable identity.
- **Schedule (optional).** A launch date and end date for the purchase window.
- **Message.** The text a blocked shopper sees at checkout.
- **Dry-run.** Monitor only: log what would be blocked without enforcing.

Per product vs per variant

- **Per product (default).** The cap sums across all variants of the drop products. Buying one of two different variants of the same item still counts as two toward a cap of, say, two. This closes the variant-switch bypass, where someone buys extra units by switching size or grade. This is the safe default for a fair drop.
- **Per variant (opt-in).** Each chosen variant is capped on its own. Use this only when you deliberately scope a drop to a single variant and a cross-variant block would surprise buyers.

If the cap is exceeded after checkout

A buyer can still slip one order through in the moment before the post-purchase check (a true simultaneous race, or a freshly made alias). You choose what DropGate does when that happens. The three actions are peers, not an ordered ladder: pick the one that fits the drop.

- **Do nothing (checkout block only).** The checkout block is the only enforcement. Nothing is cancelled or held after the fact.
- **Cancel and refund the order.** The over-cap duplicate is cancelled and refunded, with a templated, polite explanation email to the customer.
- **Hold for my review.** The over-cap order is held for you to decide on manually, instead of being cancelled automatically.

Require an account (block guest checkout)

This is an independent toggle, separate from the action above. Turn it on to block guest checkout on the drop so every buyer signs in and has a stable identity. Guests have no stable identity, so a per-person cap cannot apply to them.

Per-identity collapse is always on

For every campaign, DropGate counts purchases per person, not per account. It collapses gmail aliases and second accounts that share a normalized email or phone into one identity. This is not a setting you turn on: it runs on every drop.

How per-identity limits work

DropGate counts by **identity**, not just by cart or by single account, on every campaign. This always-on collapse links a buyer’s records together when they share a normalized email or phone number, so a second account made with an email alias (for example, the same address with a plus tag or extra dots) is recognized as the same person and carries the same count. Shipping address is used only to reconcile after the fact, never on its own to merge people.

This is why DropGate stops the alias and casual multi-account tricks that defeat “one per email” limits.

Scheduling a drop

A campaign can have a **launch date** and an **end date**. DropGate blocks checkout of the drop before it launches and after it ends, so the purchase window is enforced at checkout, not just by hiding the product. Scheduling is by date.

Dry-run (monitor mode)

Turn on **dry-run** to have DropGate log what it would block without blocking anything. Run a campaign in dry-run before a live drop to confirm it targets the right products and behaves as you expect. When you are confident, turn dry-run off to enforce.

When a duplicate slips through

A true simultaneous race, or a second account that shares an email or phone with an earlier drop purchase over the cap, can get past Layer 1. Layer 2 catches it after the order and applies the action you chose:

- **If you chose Cancel and refund the order:** the duplicate is cancelled and refunded, with a templated, polite explanation email to the customer.
- **If you chose Hold for my review:** the order is held for you instead.
- **If you chose Do nothing:** the checkout block is the only enforcement, so the order stands.

Shipping address has its own action. If an order would go over the cap only because it shares a shipping address with an earlier drop purchase (not an email or phone), DropGate applies the campaign's separate **shipping-address action**. Because a shared address is often just roommates, it **defaults to holding the order for your review** rather than cancelling. You can change it per campaign to cancel and refund instead, or to ignore shipping-address matches entirely.

The cancel and hold actions keep things transparent, so you avoid the awkward surprise refunds that make customers unhappy.

What DropGate does not do

Stated plainly, so there are no surprises:

- It is **not a raffle or draw platform**. It enforces limits; it does not run a giveaway.
- It is **not bot or fraud detection**. It acts on the identity a buyer declares.
- It is **not ID verification**. It relies on Shopify's native account sign-in, not its own identity checks.
- It **cannot stop a determined reseller** with two real phone numbers and two shipping addresses. That is the honest ceiling for any limit app.

What it does do is clear the bar most merchants actually need: stop the easy bypasses so the "someone bought ten" support tickets stop.

Getting help

If something is not working or you have a question this manual did not answer, contact support and include your store URL and the campaign you are running. We are glad to help.