Yes—at least in the **risk-management and compliance sense**, even when the lease says the Bitcoin ATM is owned, serviced, and removed by the operator. C-store chains are increasingly being pulled toward treating a BTM as a site/facilities issue because enforcement, local ordinances, customer harm, and reputational exposure attach to the *host location* as well as to the operator.

What is changing

The traditional arrangement is straightforward: the operator owns and manages the BTM; the retailer supplies floor space, power, traffic, and sometimes connectivity. Store personnel generally do not service the machine or supervise transactions. Circle K, for example, has said its Bitcoin Depot terminals are owned and managed solely by the third party, while its staff are trained to recognize common scams rather than oversee transactions.

But the practical model is shifting from:

> “It’s the operator’s machine.”

to:

> “It is a third-party machine on *our* premises, and its presence creates a site-level liability, compliance, and removal obligation.”

That makes removal increasingly resemble a facilities/vendor-management workflow: document the asset and site agreement, issue a cure or removal notice, coordinate utility/network disconnects and access, recover floor space, and verify the unit is actually gone.

Why chains are taking ownership

Driver
Local bans and deadlines
Host-site penalties
Fraud and reputationa

Driver	
exposure	
Operator distress or churn	
Store operations	

Driver

Is it widespread yet?

I would characterize it as an **emerging operational shift**, not a broadly standardized chain-wide practice that has fully displaced the operator-responsibility model.

The public evidence still says operators are normally responsible for the equipment, and c-store staff are not expected to maintain it. What has changed is the host chain’s tolerance for relying solely on that allocation when there is:

- A city or state restriction;
- A documented fraud pattern at a site;
- An operator licensing or solvency issue;
- A failure to respond to service/removal notices;
- A corporate decision to reduce exposure across a market.

In other words: **operator responsibility remains the contractual default; host responsibility is becoming the practical backstop.**

What to watch for

For industry tracking, the useful signal is not just “BTMs removed.” Watch whether chains build formal controls such as:

A central inventory of all third-party financial-service kiosks by store, operator, contract end date, and electrical circuit.

Lease clauses giving the chain unilateral shutdown/removal rights for legal, fraud, brand, safety, or regulatory reasons.

Removal SLAs, abandonment language, storage/disposal rights, and operator-paid restoration of flooring/walls/power.

A corporate facilities ticket path rather than leaving removal to an individual store manager or merchandising contact.

Incident triggers that automatically escalate a device to legal, risk, loss prevention, facilities, and the operator.

Site acceptance requirements: accessible placement, ADA clearance, electrical compliance, signage, insurance, and proof of licensing.

A pre-approved process for local authorities demanding deactivation or removal.

Bottom line

C-store chains are not necessarily assuming that they must physically uninstall the BTM themselves. But they are increasingly compelled to **own the outcome**: the machine must be disabled, removed, and the site restored on the chain’s timetable when regulation, fraud, or operator failure demands it.

That is a meaningful distinction for the kiosk industry. It moves BTMs from a simple “rent-a-corner” vendor placement toward a governed third-party asset class—closer to an ATM, air machine, lottery terminal, EV charger, or other hosted equipment that facilities, legal, and risk teams must be able to shut down and clear from the property.