

Who's Minding the Store?

A report card on retailer actions to eliminate toxic chemicals



The fifth annual *Who's Minding the Store?* retailer report card shows that the largest retailers in the United States and Canada continue to make substantial progress towards reducing and eliminating toxic chemicals and offering safer, more sustainable products and packaging. These retail sustainability actions are preventing toxic pollution of communities, workers, homes, water, food, people, and wildlife.

Fifty major retailers were evaluated this year, up from 43 in 2019. Together, these retailers have more than 200,000 stores across the United States and Canada.

Significant Progress by Many Retailers

Companies are implementing more comprehensive chemical policies and achieving greater reductions over the last five years.

Out of the 43 retailers graded previously, nearly 70% were found to have improved since their first score in the retailer report card. Since our last report in 2019, nearly two-thirds of retailers (64%) reported notable progress in reducing toxic chemicals

or plastics or improving their chemical policies. This progress is impressive given the challenges of 2020 and the ongoing impacts of a global pandemic.

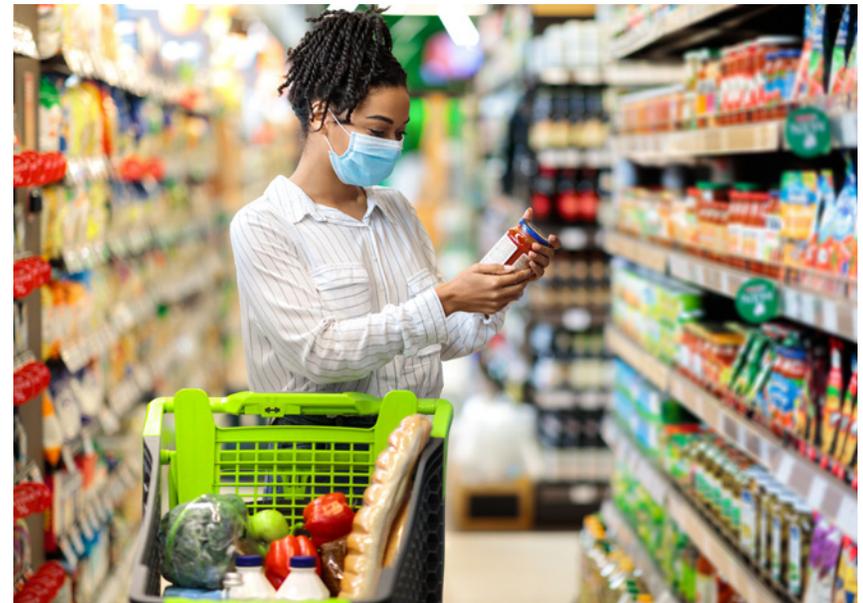
The group of 11 retailers first graded in 2016 achieved the greatest increase in average grade, moving from a D+ to a B-.

This year's report card had the lowest-ever percentage of retailers with failing grades.

In 2018, nearly half of the retailers received failing grades.

The failure rate dropped to nearly one-third in 2019 and again to one-quarter this year. Four retailers climbed out of the hole in 2021, erasing their previous F with an improved grade: McDonald's, TJX, Ulta Beauty, and Yum! Brands.

Retailers in the beauty and personal care sector made notable improvements including the first actions to address racial injustice and



health inequities from chemicals in beauty products marketed to women of color.

The beauty and personal care sector reported among the greatest gains of any retail sector. Ulta Beauty was the most improved retailer in the last year, earning a C- grade to top its F score in 2019. And Sephora has shown the greatest improvement over time, receiving an A grade, up from a D when first evaluated in 2017.

For the first-time, two retailers, Rite Aid and Target, have committed to screening for chemicals of high concern in beauty products marketed to women of color. This follows the addition of new criteria grading such commitments this past year. Whole Foods Market has also acted on some chemicals of concern in similar products. Studies have shown that women of color are disproportionately exposed to toxic chemicals from beauty and personal care products.

The discount stores won “most improved” retail sector overall from last year.

Dollar Tree improved from a D+ to a C+. Dollar General earned a C- grade, making progress from its D grade in 2019.

High performers are consistent and more companies are joining their ranks.

This year, Sephora and Whole Foods Market were awarded A’s and joined consistent high performers Apple and Target, who each earned an A+, and IKEA and Walmart, both with A- grades. These retailers represent the best in class in their commitment to safer chemicals.

More retailers are now phasing out dangerous chemicals as a class, making a larger impact on safer products.

Retailers are increasingly phasing out entire classes of toxic chemicals such as bisphenols, organohalogen flame retardants, per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances (PFAS), and *ortho*-phthalates.

- ***Twelve retailers are targeting PFAS “forever chemicals” for reduction or elimination in food packaging at more than 65,000 store locations globally.*** 7-Eleven, Ahold Delhaize, Albertsons, Amazon, Chipotle, McDonald’s, Panera Bread, Rite Aid, Taco Bell, TJX, Trader Joe’s, and Whole Foods Market are targeting PFAS for reduction or elimination in food packaging and food service ware.
- ***Some retailers are taking new action to restrict PFAS in textiles.*** Lowe’s became the first major retailer to announce it will no longer sell fabric protection sprays containing PFAS. REI announced that it is restricting PFAS in all clothing treatment (and ski wax) products but still allows PFAS in outdoor apparel and other textiles.
- ***Eight retailers are tackling the most toxic plastics.*** Polyvinyl chloride (PVC or vinyl) and expanded polystyrene (EPS) foam are among some of the most dangerous plastics due to highly hazardous chemicals used in production or disposal. We evaluated retailers’ actions to phase out these and other toxic plastics for the first time this year. A few noteworthy examples include the pledge by Apple to eliminate all plastics in packaging by 2025, and the phase-out of EPS foam packaging by Yum! Brands (parent of KFC, Pizza Hut, and Taco Bell).

Many Retailers Still Need to Act

While the progress among certain retailers is significant, far too many retailers fail to take even the most basic of actions needed to protect the health of their customers. They have failed to ensure that the products and packaging they sell do not contain harmful chemicals and plastics that can harm consumers, communities, workers, and the environment.

A total of 12 companies earned failing grades this year. Named to the 2021 Retailer Report Card Toxic Hall of Shame are:

- ✗ 7-Eleven
- ✗ 99 Cents Only Stores
- ✗ Ace Hardware
- ✗ Alimentation Couche-Tarde (Circle K, Couche-Tard)
- ✗ Metro
- ✗ Nordstrom
- ✗ Publix
- ✗ Restaurant Brands International (Burger King, Tim Hortons, Popeyes)
- ✗ Sally Beauty
- ✗ Sobeys
- ✗ Starbucks
- ✗ Subway

How retailers rank on tackling toxic chemicals

EXTRA CREDIT

| | 23.5 PTS. | 5 PTS. | 15 PTS. | 17.5 PTS. | 26 PTS. | 16 PTS. | 20 PTS. | 7.5 PTS. | 8.5 PTS. | 5 PTS. | 10 PTS. | 5 PTS. | 5 PTS. | Total Score |
|---|-----------|-----------|----------------|------------|---------|--------------------|--------------|--------------------|-----------------------|--------------------|------------------------|---------------|-------------------|---------------------|
| | Policy | Oversight | Accountability | Disclosure | Action | Safer Alternatives | Transparency | Chemical Footprint | Third-party Standards | Joint Announcement | Continuous Improvement | Collaboration | Impact Investment | |
|  7-Eleven | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 3 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 3 | 0 | 0 | 6 F |
|  99 Cents Only Stores | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 F |
|  Ace Hardware | 1.25 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 3 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 5.25 F |
|  Ahold Delhaize | 12.5 | 5 | 3.75 | 0 | 5 | 2 | 2.5 | 3.75 | 0 | 2.5 | 3 | 0 | 0 | 40 C- |
|  Albertsons | 8.75 | 2.5 | 3.75 | 0 | 10.5 | 3.25 | 6.25 | 0 | 3.75 | 0 | 0 | 2.5 | 0 | 41.25 C- |
|  ALDI | 9.5 | 2.5 | 7.5 | 1.25 | 13.5 | 4.5 | 6.25 | 4.5 | 4.5 | 0 | 4.75 | 5 | 0 | 63.75 B- |
|  Alimentation Couche-Tard | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 F |
|  Amazon | 8.75 | 3.75 | 2.5 | 6 | 6 | 4.5 | 8.25 | 0 | 3 | 2.5 | 6.5 | 5 | 0 | 56.75 C+ |
|  Apple | 21 | 5 | 12.5 | 10.5 | 18.5 | 13.75 | 7.5 | 0 | 7.5 | 0 | 10 | 5 | 5 | 116.25 A+ |

How retailers rank on tackling toxic chemicals

EXTRA CREDIT

| | 23.5 PTS. | 5 PTS. | 15 PTS. | 17.5 PTS. | 26 PTS. | 16 PTS. | 20 PTS. | 7.5 PTS. | 8.5 PTS. | 5 PTS. | 10 PTS. | 5 PTS. | 5 PTS. | Total Score |
|--|-----------|-----------|----------------|------------|---------|--------------------|--------------|--------------------|-----------------------|--------------------|------------------------|---------------|-------------------|--------------------|
| | Policy | Oversight | Accountability | Disclosure | Action | Safer Alternatives | Transparency | Chemical Footprint | Third-party Standards | Joint Announcement | Continuous Improvement | Collaboration | Impact Investment | |
|  Bed Bath & Beyond | 13.75 | 2.5 | 7.5 | 7 | 4.5 | 5.5 | 8.25 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 10 | 0 | 0 | 59 C+ |
|  Best Buy | 10 | 2.5 | 5 | 4.5 | 5 | 4.5 | 7.5 | 0 | 1.5 | 0 | 6.5 | 5 | 0 | 52 C |
|  Canadian Tire | 8.75 | 1.25 | 0 | 0 | 12 | 0 | 7.5 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 29.5 D |
|  Chipotle | 7 | 0 | 1.25 | 0 | 6 | 0 | 5 | 0 | 0 | 2.5 | 3 | 0 | 0 | 24.75 D |
|  Costco | 12.5 | 2.5 | 7.5 | 7 | 13.5 | 8.5 | 7 | 0 | 1.5 | 0 | 3 | 2.5 | 0 | 65.5 B- |
|  CVS Health | 12.5 | 5 | 7.5 | 5 | 16 | 2 | 8.5 | 1.5 | 0 | 2.5 | 6.5 | 5 | 0 | 72 B |
|  Dick's Sporting Goods | 5 | 1.25 | 6.25 | 1.25 | 4.5 | 2 | 5 | 0 | 1.5 | 0 | 3 | 5 | 0 | 34.75 D+ |
|  Dollar General | 10 | 2.5 | 3.75 | 4.5 | 3 | 4.5 | 8.25 | 0 | 0 | 2.5 | 3 | 0 | 0 | 42 C- |
|  Dollar Tree | 7.5 | 2.5 | 5 | 8.5 | 17 | 2 | 8.25 | 4.5 | 0 | 0 | 6.5 | 0 | 0 | 61.75 C+ |

How retailers rank on tackling toxic chemicals

EXTRA CREDIT

| | 23.5 PTS. | 5 PTS. | 15 PTS. | 17.5 PTS. | 26 PTS. | 16 PTS. | 20 PTS. | 7.5 PTS. | 8.5 PTS. | 5 PTS. | 10 PTS. | 5 PTS. | 5 PTS. | Total Score |
|---|-----------|-----------|----------------|------------|---------|--------------------|--------------|--------------------|-----------------------|--------------------|------------------------|---------------|-------------------|--------------------|
| | Policy | Oversight | Accountability | Disclosure | Action | Safer Alternatives | Transparency | Chemical Footprint | Third-party Standards | Joint Announcement | Continuous Improvement | Collaboration | Impact Investment | |
|  Dunkin' Brands | 5 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 16 | 0 | 2.5 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 23.5 D |
|  The Home Depot | 11.25 | 2.5 | 7.5 | 8.5 | 19.5 | 4.5 | 9 | 0 | 3 | 2.5 | 3 | 5 | 0 | 76.25 B |
|  IKEA | 18.5 | 2.5 | 12.5 | 9.5 | 15 | 9.5 | 5 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 10 | 5 | 2.5 | 90 A- |
|  Kohl's | 11.25 | 5 | 10 | 0 | 6 | 2 | 8.25 | 0 | 5.25 | 2.5 | 6 | 0 | 0 | 56.25 C+ |
|  Kroger | 5 | 1.25 | 5 | 0 | 10.5 | 2 | 5 | 0 | 3.75 | 2.5 | 6.5 | 5 | 0 | 46.5 C- |
|  L Brands | 13.75 | 0 | 8.75 | 5 | 15 | 2 | 7.75 | 0 | 5.25 | 0 | 6.5 | 5 | 0 | 69 B- |
|  Loblaws | 8.75 | 1.25 | 6.25 | 5 | 15 | 0 | 5 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 6.5 | 0 | 0 | 47.75 C |
|  Lowe's | 10 | 2.5 | 5 | 6 | 18 | 2 | 7.5 | 0 | 3 | 2.5 | 6.5 | 5 | 0 | 68 B- |
|  Macy's | 5 | 1.25 | 1.25 | 0 | 3 | 1 | 2.5 | 0 | 3.75 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 17.75 D- |

How retailers rank on tackling toxic chemicals

EXTRA CREDIT

| | 23.5 PTS. | 5 PTS. | 15 PTS. | 17.5 PTS. | 26 PTS. | 16 PTS. | 20 PTS. | 7.5 PTS. | 8.5 PTS. | 5 PTS. | 10 PTS. | 5 PTS. | 5 PTS. | Total Score |
|--|-----------|-----------|----------------|------------|---------|--------------------|--------------|--------------------|-----------------------|--------------------|------------------------|---------------|-------------------|--------------------|
| | Policy | Oversight | Accountability | Disclosure | Action | Safer Alternatives | Transparency | Chemical Footprint | Third-party Standards | Joint Announcement | Continuous Improvement | Collaboration | Impact Investment | |
|  McDonald's | 6.25 | 0 | 2.5 | 4 | 6 | 0 | 5 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 3 | 0 | 0 | 26.75 D |
|  Metro | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 F |
|  Nordstrom | 2.5 | 0 | 2.5 | 0 | 0 | 2 | 5 | 0 | 1.5 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 13.5 F |
|  Office Depot | 10 | 2.5 | 10 | 6 | 3 | 2 | 7.5 | 0 | 3 | 2.5 | 3 | 0 | 0 | 49.5 C |
|  Panera Bread | 7.5 | 2.5 | 5 | 7 | 7.75 | 2 | 2.5 | 0 | 0 | 2.5 | 3 | 0 | 0 | 39.75 C- |
|  Publix | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 F |
|  REI | 13.75 | 2.5 | 8.75 | 6 | 15 | 3.25 | 7.5 | 0 | 5.25 | 0 | 10 | 5 | 0 | 77 B |
|  Restaurant Brands International | 4.5 | 0 | 1.25 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 2.5 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 3 | 0 | 0 | 11.25 F |
|  Rite Aid | 16.5 | 2.5 | 9.5 | 9.5 | 17 | 4.5 | 10.5 | 3 | 0.75 | 5 | 6.5 | 0 | 0 | 85.25 B+ |

How retailers rank on tackling toxic chemicals

EXTRA CREDIT

| | 23.5 PTS. | 5 PTS. | 15 PTS. | 17.5 PTS. | 26 PTS. | 16 PTS. | 20 PTS. | 7.5 PTS. | 8.5 PTS. | 5 PTS. | 10 PTS. | 5 PTS. | 5 PTS. | Total Score |
|---|-----------|-----------|----------------|------------|---------|--------------------|--------------|--------------------|-----------------------|--------------------|------------------------|---------------|-------------------|--------------------|
| | Policy | Oversight | Accountability | Disclosure | Action | Safer Alternatives | Transparency | Chemical Footprint | Third-party Standards | Joint Announcement | Continuous Improvement | Collaboration | Impact Investment | |
|  Sally Beauty | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 F |
|  Sephora | 14.5 | 5 | 7.5 | 10.5 | 16.5 | 13 | 8.75 | 0 | 1.5 | 2.5 | 6.5 | 5 | 5 | 96.25 A |
|  Sobeys | 0.75 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 4.5 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 5.25 F |
|  Staples | 6.25 | 2.5 | 2.5 | 5 | 0 | 6.5 | 8.25 | 1.5 | 2.25 | 0 | 0 | 5 | 0 | 39.75 C- |
|  Starbucks | 3.75 | 0 | 2.5 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 5 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 11.25 F |
|  Subway | 2.5 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 2.5 | 0 | 4.5 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 9.5 F |
|  Target | 18.25 | 5 | 7.5 | 9.5 | 15 | 8.5 | 10 | 6 | 5.25 | 0 | 10 | 5 | 5 | 105 A+ |
|  TJX | 8.25 | 1.25 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 6 | 0.75 | 0 | 0 | 6.5 | 5 | 0 | 28.75 D |
|  Trader Joe's | 7 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 8 | 1 | 6.5 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 3 | 0 | 0 | 25.5 D |

How retailers rank on tackling toxic chemicals

EXTRA CREDIT

| | 23.5 PTS. | 5 PTS. | 15 PTS. | 17.5 PTS. | 26 PTS. | 16 PTS. | 20 PTS. | 7.5 PTS. | 8.5 PTS. | 5 PTS. | 10 PTS. | 5 PTS. | 5 PTS. | Total Score |
|---|-----------|-----------|----------------|------------|---------|--------------------|--------------|--------------------|-----------------------|--------------------|------------------------|---------------|-------------------|-------------|
| | Policy | Oversight | Accountability | Disclosure | Action | Safer Alternatives | Transparency | Chemical Footprint | Third-party Standards | Joint Announcement | Continuous Improvement | Collaboration | Impact Investment | |
|  Ulta Beauty | 7.5 | 2.5 | 5 | 8.5 | 3 | 2 | 5.5 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 6.5 | 2.5 | 0 | 43 C- |
|  Walgreens | 10 | 3.75 | 5 | 7.5 | 6 | 4.5 | 13 | 0 | 3 | 5 | 3 | 2.5 | 0 | 63.25 B- |
|  Walmart | 13.75 | 2.5 | 2.5 | 8 | 15 | 8.5 | 11.25 | 7.5 | 4 | 2.5 | 10 | 5 | 2.5 | 93 A- |
|  Whole Foods Market | 16.25 | 2.5 | 6.25 | 8.25 | 20.5 | 8.5 | 10.25 | 4.5 | 3.75 | 2.5 | 10 | 5 | 0 | 98.25 A |
|  Yum! Brands | 6.25 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 5 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 6.5 | 0 | 0 | 17.75 D- |