

Who's Minding the Store?

A report card on retailer actions to eliminate toxic chemicals

Amid rising concern about highly toxic 'forever chemicals' that have been found in drinking water and food, major retail chains are taking steps to rid their products and packaging of these PFAS (or per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances). In a first, **The Home Depot** (who earned a B+ grade this year) and **Lowe's** (B- grade) publicly committed to eliminate PFAS from carpeting and rugs by the end of 2019. Several retailers are starting to phase out these dangerous chemicals from food packaging, such as take-out containers and bakery bags, including **Ahold Delhaize** (C-), **Albertsons** (C), **Panera Bread** (D+), **Trader Joe's** (D-), and **Whole Foods** (B+). In addition, Whole Foods prohibited several PFAS in personal care products, and **Staples** (C) is restricting PFAS in textiles and furniture.

That's just one sign of growing market leadership revealed in the fourth annual "Who's Minding the Store?" retailer report card, published by the Mind the Store Campaign of the national nonprofit Safer Chemicals, Healthy Families. This year, we graded a diverse group of forty-three of the largest retailers in the United States and Canada on their progress in ensuring the chemical safety of the products and

packaging they sell at more than 190,000 retail stores and online.

Retailers find themselves on the front line of consumer discontent with product safety. Market leadership remains critical because our federal chemical safety system remains badly broken. More than forty thousand industrial chemicals are added to or used to make consumer products and food packaging. The vast majority have never been adequately tested for safety. A couple of thousand are already known to threaten human health and the environment. The report card benchmarks retailer leadership on improving the chemical safety of products and packaging across fourteen criteria.

The 2019 report card revealed **another major retail trend – food packaging has become a major focus for toxics use reduction**. For example, the nation's fourth-largest retail grocer, **Ahold Delhaize** (C-), whose brands include Food



Lion, Giant, Hannaford, and Stop & Shop, adopted their first-ever public policy aimed at eliminating the chemical classes of PFAS, *ortho*-phthalates and bisphenols in food packaging for private-label products.

This grocer was among more than a dozen retail chains that announced major new or expanded safer chemicals policies in the last year. These public commitments mark a systematic approach to reducing or eliminating chemicals of high concern

and improving disclosure of chemical ingredients in products and packaging.

These seven ‘most improved’ evaluated retailers of 2019 earned higher grades than their previous ratings by making major new public commitments on safer chemicals during the last year:

- **Ahold Delhaize** (C-) — Adopted a public safer chemicals policy for the first time
- **Bed Bath & Beyond** (C+) — Expanded restrictions to new product categories
- **Dollar General** (D) — Adopted a safer chemicals policy to eliminate eight toxic chemicals in three years
- **Lowe’s** (B-) — Launched a safer chemicals policy and program for the first time
- **Panera Bread** (D+) — Restricted chemicals in food packaging and food gloves
- **Sephora** (B+) — Will reduce key toxic chemicals in brand-name products by 50% in three years
- **Staples** (C) — Launched a safer chemicals policy that restricts several classes of priority chemicals

The top-performing evaluated retailers with the strongest safer chemicals policies and practices have remained relatively constant over the past year. They are **Apple** (A+ grade), **Target** (A), **Walmart** (A), and **IKEA** (A-). These companies lead the retail sector in best practices.

The average grade earned by all forty-three retailers evaluated was a C-, a slight gain from last year’s D+ average. Overall, 63% of evaluated companies improved over the past year alone. The eleven retailers who have been graded in every year’s report card dramatically improved their average grade from a D+ in 2016, the first year of the report card, to a B- this year.

Fourteen retailers, or about one-third of all retailers evaluated, received an F grade this year for failure to adopt even basic public safer chemicals policies to address toxics that may be in their products and packaging. Nine of these retailers failed to score even a single point out of the possible total of 146.5 points.

Named to the 2019 Retailer Report Card Toxic Hall of Shame are:

- **99 Cents Only** (F)
- **Ace Hardware** (F)
- **McDonald’s** (F)
- **Metro** (F)
- **Nordstrom** (F)
- **Publix** (F)
- **Restaurant Brands International** (F) (includes Burger King, Tim Hortons, Popeyes)
- **Sally Beauty** (F)
- **Sobeys** (F)
- **Starbucks** (F)
- **Subway** (F)

- **TJX Companies** (F) (includes TJ Maxx, Marshalls, HomeSense, Sierra)
- **Ulta** (F)
- **Yum! Brands** (F) (includes Taco Bell, KFC, Pizza Hut, WingStreet)
























The worst performing evaluated retail sector, which lag behind others in public chemical safety policies and practices, was **restaurants**, with an F grade average for six evaluated retailers

To reduce potential liability and reputational risk and meet customers’ growing expectation that products and packaging will be free from dangerous chemicals, the Mind the Store Campaign strongly recommends that every retail chain:

- ✓ Adopt a written public policy and program to transition to safer chemicals;
- ✓ Set specific public goals and timelines for reducing use of chemicals of high concern;
- ✓ Disclose all ingredients of products and packaging with help from its suppliers;
- ✓ Ensure suppliers transition to safer alternatives and avoid regrettable substitution;
- ✓ Demonstrate continuous improvement in expanding the reach of its safer chemicals policy.










How retailers rank on tackling toxic chemicals

EXTRA CREDIT

	17.5 pts.  Policy	5 pts.  Oversight	12.5 pts.  Accountability	13 pts.  Disclosure	16 pts.  Action	13.5 pts.  Safer Alternatives	18 pts.  Transparency	7.5 pts.  Chemical Footprint	8.5 pts.  Third-party Standards	5 pts.  Joint Announcement	15 pts.  Continuous Improvement	5 pts.  Safer Products	5 pts.  Collaboration	5 pts.  Impact Investment	Final Score	
 99 Cents Only	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0 PTS. F
 Ace Hardware	2.5	0	0	0	3	0	1	0	0	0	5	0	0	0	0	11.5 PTS. F
 Ahold Delhaize	7.5	5	3.75	0	0	2	6.25	2.25	0	2.5	5	5	0	0	0	39.25 PTS. C-
 Albertsons	10	2.5	2.5	0	12	3.25	6.5	0	3.75	0	5	2.5	2.5	0	0	50.5 PTS. C
 Aldi	13.5	2.5	7.5	0	15	3.25	9	0	4.5	0	0	2.5	5	0	0	62.75 PTS. C+
 Amazon	7.5	3.75	2.5	2.5	3	4.5	9	0	3	2.5	10	2.5	5	0	0	55.75 PTS. C+
 Apple	16.25	5	10	8.5	16	12.5	9	0	7.5	0	15	0	5	5	0	109.75 PTS. A+
 Best Buy	12.5	5	7.5	2.5	0	4.5	5	0	1.5	0	0	2.5	5	0	0	46 PTS. C-
 Buy Buy Baby	12.25	2.5	7.5	5	6	4.5	8.25	0	0	0	10	0	0	0	0	56 PTS. C+










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 Canadian Tire	8.75	1.25	0	0	13.5	0	7.5	0	0	2.5	5	0	0	0	38.5 PTS. D+
 Costco	12	2.5	7.5	0	3	6.5	7	0	3	0	5	0	0	0	46.5 PTS. C-
 CVS Health	10	5	5	6	15	2	9	1.5	0	0	10	2.5	5	0	71 PTS. B
 Dollar General	10	2.5	1.25	3.5	0	4.5	3.25	0	0	0	5	0	0	0	30 PTS. D
 Dollar Tree	7.5	0	2.5	2.5	0	2	9.75	4.5	0	0	7.5	0	0	0	36.25 PTS. D+
 The Home Depot	8.75	2.5	7.5	8.5	15	4.5	8.25	0	3	2.5	10	5	5	0	80.5 PTS. B+
 Ikea	15	2.5	10	6	15	11.5	6.5	0	0	0	15	0	5	2.5	89 PTS. A-
 Kohl's	12.5	5	7.5	0	3	2	7.5	0	7	0	5	5	0	0	54.5 PTS. C
 Kroger	3.75	1.25	1.25	0	13.5	2	1.5	0	3	0	5	5	5	0	41.25 PTS. C-

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 Loblaws	12.5	2.5	6.25	2.5	15	0	7.5	0	0	0	0	0	5	0	51.25 PTS. C
 Lowe's	12.5	2.5	2.5	2.5	13.5	2	7.5	0	3	2.5	10	2.5	5	0	66 PTS. B-
 Macy's	5	1.25	1.25	0	3	1	2.5	0	3.75	0	10	5	0	0	32.75 PTS. D+
 McDonald's	0	0	0	0	6	0	0	0	0	0	5	0	0	0	11 PTS. F
 Metro	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0 PTS. F
 Nordstrom	2.5	0	2.5	0	0	2	5	0	1.5	0	0	0	0	0	13.5 PTS. F
 Office Depot	5	2.5	8.75	0	0	2	5	0	3	0	0	0	0	0	26.25 PTS. D
 Panera Bread	11.25	2.5	2.5	2.5	6	2	0	0	0	0	7.5	0	0	0	34.25 PTS. D+
 Publix	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0 PTS. F






















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 Restaurant Brands International	1.25	0	2.5	0	3	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	7.75 PTS. F
 Rite Aid	12.5	2.5	8.75	3.5	15	4.5	12.5	3	0.75	5	10	2.5	5	0	85.5 PTS. B+
 Sally Beauty	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0 PTS. F
 Sephora	12.5	5	7.5	8.5	12	2	8.75	0.75	1.5	0	10	5	5	2.5	81 PTS. B+
 Sobeys	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0 PTS. F
 Staples	5.5	2.5	2.5	5	0	6.5	8.25	1.5	3	0	5	2.5	5	2.5	49.75 PTS. C
 Starbucks	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0 PTS. F
 Subway	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0 PTS. F
 Target	13.75	5	7.5	7.5	15	8.5	9	6	5.25	0	10	5	5	5	102.5 PTS. A

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 TJX Companies	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0 PTS. F
 Trader Joe's	2.5	0	0	0	3	1	6.5	0	0	0	5	0	0	0	0	18 PTS. D-
 Ulta Beauty	7.5	2.5	0	0	0	2	1.5	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	13.5 PTS. F
 Walgreens	10	3.75	2.5	6.5	6	4.5	11.5	0	3	5	5	2.5	5	0	0	65.25 PTS. B-
 Walmart	12.5	2.5	2.5	7.5	15	8.5	14.5	6	5.5	2.5	10	1.25	5	5	5	98.25 PTS. A
 Whole Foods Market	10	2.5	3.75	5	15	8.5	10.75	0	3.75	2.5	15	5	0	0	0	81.75 PTS. B+
 Yum! Brands	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0 PTS. F