



Girl Scout Merchandise seeks to reduce our environmental impact and integrate social and environmental sustainability into our products and operations wherever possible. This past year, we undertook several sustainability initiatives involving our organizational strategy and our Girl Scout Cookie Program, among others. As part of our commitment to sustainability, we also initiated partnerships with leaders in the field, including Environmental Defense Fund and Massachusetts Institute of Technology. Our team oversees all the Girl Scout products you know and love, from vests, badges, and apparel to Girl Scout Cookies. Because these products are made with ingredients and materials from around the world, we recognize that our operations have a large environmental, social, and economic impact. We also know that by sourcing our products from ethical companies and/or woman-owned businesses, we can positively impact communities, workers, and the environment. Therefore, in conjunction with the Girl Scout Properties community, we developed the following sustainability strategy to align our operations with the [United Nations Sustainable Development Goals](#) (SDGs).

Our Girl Scout Merchandise and Properties teams set targets to advance [Goals 7 – Affordable and Clean Energy](#), [8 – Decent Work and Economic Growth](#), [12 – Responsible Consumption and Production](#), and [13 – Climate Action](#) over the coming years.

The Girl Scouts of the USA Supports the Sustainable Development Goals



Sustainable Development Goals 8, 12, and 13 are particularly relevant to Girl Scout Merchandise. For instance, Girl Scout Merchandise used SDG 8 – Decent Work and Economic Growth as a framework for our socially responsible products, and SDG 12 – Responsible Consumption and Production as a

framework for our packaging sustainability goals, thoughtfully sourced product materials, and sustainability collaborations with our bakers. SDG 13 – Climate Action will help Girl Scouts Merchandise integrate sustainability into conversations with other Girl Scout teams, councils, and troops.

Below you will find more information about the sustainability projects already underway across our products and packaging.

OVERVIEW

We spent 2020 identifying and understanding the current state of our cookie packaging, distribution center packaging, and opportunities for more sustainable and socially responsible merchandise. After careful analysis, we determined an ideal future state for these items and developed a strategy for achieving our goals. We also initiated partnerships with MIT and Environmental Defense Fund to understand the landscape of sustainability, because we understand that sustainability cuts across functions and sectors. We acknowledged that we did not have all the answers when it comes to sustainability, and we therefore sought to engage outside experts.

1. GIRL SCOUT MERCHANDISE

Girl Scout Merchandise is launching our first collection of sustainable and socially responsible products in 2021. We intentionally sourced these products from businesses owned by women entrepreneurs or Girl Scout alumni, from B Corporations, and from companies with high ethical standards. This assortment includes fair-trade products made by workers under the safest working conditions, who earned a premium for their labor. Moreover, this assortment includes upcycled or climate-neutral products, products made with recycled materials and organic cotton, and products with Forest Stewardship Council® and OEKO-TEX® certifications. We increasingly work to offer durable products that supplant the need for single-use plastics.

We are excited to announce that by partnering with a licensing vendor in 2020, we launched a sweatshirt that contains 100% recycled material (50% recycled cotton, 50% recycled poly material). In addition, in November 2020 we launched a shoe at our Girl Scouts shop that features a recycled canvas upper, synthetic leather overlays, and recycled metal hardware. The shoe does not contain any animal materials.

As always, Girl Scouts require all production partners to certify that they do not use child labor or forced labor and do not engage in nondiscriminatory employment practices. We plan to continue sourcing as many products as possible using social and environmental responsible standards.

2. GIRL SCOUT COOKIES

Our cookie brand is the second-largest cookie brand in the country. We are pleased to share that there is no BPA in any of our packaging. In addition, no PFAS chemicals are present in our packaging, and our cookies and cookie packaging are not processed with equipment that uses PFAS. Lastly, our paper-based cookie boxes are made from 100% recycled paper, which means that the paper may have been recycled many times already. Some cookie varieties are produced in soft pack packaging only, without a box. The film overwrap is similar to the protective wrapping found inside the boxes of the other cookie varieties and is recyclable in certain markets. While the shift to film overwrap has eliminated thousands of pounds of paperboard from the waste stream and the reduction in packaging

weight has saved thousands of gallons of diesel fuel, the material may not be accepted by some local recycling services.

However, there is potential here to have an even larger impact. Packaging is the leading contributor to plastic waste, accounting for 36% of it. As a result, we're focused heavily on improving our packaging for the future—Our hope is that eventually, all Girl Scout Cookie packaging will be recycled so that less plastic reaches our oceans and marine life. As Girl Scout Cookies are produced and packaged by our two licensed bakers, ABC Bakers and Little Brownie Bakers, we regularly collaborate with them on this effort.

Our objective is to offer consumers products with packaging that is more environmentally friendly while maintaining freshness, shelf life, and product protection. This encompasses three key goals:

- Reduce the amount of material used.
- Optimize the use of renewable or recycled materials.
- Remove hard-to-recycle plastics, where possible, by shifting toward more recyclable materials.

We honor the golden rule of reduce, reuse, and recycle—in that order—and we keep this principle in mind when discussing sustainability with our bakers and vendors.

3. DISTRIBUTION CENTER

Girl Scouts ships all merchandise (e.g., welcome kits, uniforms, and badges) except for cookies from our 60,000-square-foot distribution center in Randolph, New Jersey. The facility primarily routes packages, but it also performs some assembly. While our Properties team manages the energy at our distribution center, Girl Scout Merchandise oversees all packaging at the facility. Mid-2020, we conducted an audit of our packaging materials and set sustainability goals. Currently, our paper is 100% recyclable and contains 100% recycled content, and our poly mailer bags are made from 100% recycled content and can be recycled with plastic bags. However, several improvement opportunities came to our attention regarding our poly bags, stretch wrap, and corrugated cartons. At the time, our poly bags and stretch wrap were not recyclable or made of recycled content, and our corrugated cartons were recyclable but contained only 50% recycled content.

After analyzing our packaging and partnering with MIT Sustainability Lab to conduct a deep dive into our energy consumption, we developed a three-year strategy for implementing our packaging and energy goals. We aim to divert material from landfills by switching to products that contain an increased amount of recycled content. Our goal, which applies to current and new packaging, is to use at least 25% recycled content in our plastic packaging and at least 75% recycled content in our paper and carton packaging. In late 2020, we placed our first order of poly bags made with 30% post-consumer recycled content, and we continue to work with our partners to identify options for stretch wrap and corrugated cartons.

We look forward to continuing to partner with vendors who align with our sustainability strategy and values.