



In-house Packaging Policy

BriarPatch's Packaging Policy was created as guidance for selecting packaging with minimal environmental impact that retains the quality and shelf-life of the product without compromising human health or safety. This policy also seeks to support our 2025 Sustainability Goal to reduce single-use plastic packaging by 40% from our 2019 baseline.

The Importance of Packaging

Packaging plays an important role in grocery retail and food service by extending product shelf life and helping to safely transport and store products, in turn reducing contamination and food waste. However, it also significantly contributes to landfill waste, climate change and degradation of natural resources and ecosystems. Further, some additives in packaging materials have known threats to human health.

Packaging Policy

Identifying packaging that meets BriarPatch standards of care presents both a unique challenge and opportunity. Other considerations in packaging decisions and purchases include State and Federal regulations, availability of packaging, access to recycling markets and commercial composting facilities, and emerging information or innovation in packaging materials. The Packaging Policy will be reviewed annually and adjusted as needed to reflect changes.

What It Addresses

This policy addresses in-house packaging which includes packaging material used in the Deli and Bakery, Produce, Bulk, Meat & Seafood, and the Front End. BriarPatch offers single-use biodegradable straws at our utensil stations. Straws provide access to hydration and nutrition and are necessary for some bodies' abilities. We also offer sip-lids on hot & cold cups and sell reusable straws to accommodate other preferences.

What It Does Not Cover

This policy does not cover retail products that arrive pre-packaged by a manufacturer. Information on standards for pre-packaged merchandise can be found in our Merchandising Policy.

Packaging Standards

BriarPatch seeks to reduce overall use of packaging and use the least amount necessary to safely package food items.

BriarPatch will prioritize packaging materials that are reusable, made from recycled/upcycled content or renewable materials, compostable and/or readily recyclable domestically, including:

- ✓ Recycled paper packaging
- ✓ Recyclable aluminum
- ✓ Recyclable glass
- ✓ Compostable and/or biodegradable fiber and bioplastics (plant-based)
- ✓ Recycled polyethylene terephthalate plastic (rPET #1)

Due to lack of recyclability, BriarPatch seeks to minimize packaging made of:

- High-density polyethylene plastic (HDPE #2)
- Low-density polyethylene plastic (LDPE #4)
- Polypropylene plastic (PP #5)
- Mixed material packaging

Due to human health concerns and environmental degradation, BriarPatch seeks to avoid packaging containing:

- ✗ Polystyrene (PS, EPS, OPS)
- ✗ Per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances (PFAS) *CA law as of 1/1/2023
- ✗ Phthalates
- ✗ Bisphenols (BPA, BPS, BPF)
- ✗ Polyvinyl Chloride plastic (PVC #3)
- ✗ Non-biodegradable plastic straws

Glossary of Materials

Polylactic Acid (PLA) Bioplastic is commonly made from corn through a high-pressure and heat process and can be commercially composted*. Since it does not fall into any of the other number categories used to identify plastics, PLA is often marked as resin #7, which is a catch-all designation for other plastics that do not fit under the six other resin numbers. *Currently, Nevada County does not have access to a commercial facility that composts PLA, so it goes to the landfill.

Polyethylene terephthalate plastic (PET #1) PET is a clear, tough plastic with good gas and moisture barrier properties. It is used to make bottles for liquid and several other food packaging applications. PET is the most recycled plastic with recovery rate estimates between 23%-26% (2021).

High-density polyethylene plastic (HDPE #2) HDPE refers to plastic used to make bottles for milk, juice, water, and laundry products. This resin is well suited to packaging products, such as milk, with short shelf lives. This is the 2nd most recycled plastic with an estimated recycling rate of 19%.

Polyvinyl Chloride plastic (PVC #3) Used to make flooring, shower curtains, house siding, garden hoses, and many other products including some cling wrap. PVC products contain vinyl chloride, a substance EPA acknowledges is a human carcinogen, as well as significant concentrations of chemical additives, such as phthalate plasticizers, known to have toxic, carcinogenic and mutagenic effects on humans and other life forms.

Low-density polyethylene plastic (LDPE #4) Used to make cellophane wrap, disposable diaper liners and squeeze bottles. Not commonly recycled and not recyclable in local mixed recycling bins. Plastic film can be recycled through single-stream collection programs.

Polypropylene plastic (PP #5) Used to make a wide variety of products including containers, tubes, and fibers for material. Common #5 items include plastic deodorant containers and yogurt containers. High heat tolerance means it is often used in “microwave safe” food containers. Recycling rates are estimated between 1%-3%.

Polystyrene (PS #6, EPS) You may know this as “Styrofoam.” Used to make coffee cups, take-out food packaging, egg cartons, and packaging “peanuts.” It contains the chemical styrene, which has been linked to nervous system problems, hearing loss, impaired memory and concentration, and is classified by the International Agency for Research on Cancer (IARC) as a probable

human carcinogen. Some evidence has shown styrene, along with other toxic chemicals, can leach out of polystyrene food packaging materials into food, a process that increases with temperature.

Mixed material packaging Comprised of two or more materials adhered together. Example would be a paper pouch lined with plastic film. This packaging is difficult to recycle as infrastructure is not set up to separate the materials on the packaging.

Per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances (PFAS) Family of man-made chemicals used in many products to provide stain resistance, water and oil repellency, and other properties. Scientific studies have shown that exposure to PFAS may be linked to harmful health effects in humans and animals.

Phthalates are a group of chemicals used to make plastics more durable. They are often called plasticizers. Some phthalates are used to help dissolve other materials. Phthalates are in hundreds of products. They have been identified as reproductive and developmental toxicants.

Bisphenols (BPA, BPS, BPF) These are a class of chemicals used in manufacturing plastics and resins, which have been identified as negatively impacting the endocrine systems.

REFERENCES:

EPA, Plastics: Material-Specific Data

www.epa.gov/facts-and-figures-about-materials-waste-and-recycling/plastics-material-specific-data

Food Packaging Containing Perfluoroalkyl or Polyfluoroalkyl Substances

[dtsc.ca.gov/scp/food-packaging-containing-pfass/https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/32691967](https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/32691967)

National Institute of Health, Bisphenols and Phthalates

pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/32691967