



Product Description

Diapers include disposable paper-based and fabric products enclosed intended for use by infants, adults, children, or pets for managing bodily fluid and waste. Product types include pull up diapers, training pants, swim diapers, adult diapers, and nappies.

Mission

The mission of The Sustainability Consortium (TSC) is to improve the sustainability of products when they are made, purchased, and used, with a focus on manufacturers and the retail buyers who decide what products to carry in stores. The information in this document is drawn from our detailed research on known and potential social and environmental impacts across product life cycles. TSC acknowledges that other issues exist, but we have included here those that are most relevant to the decision making of retail buying teams and manufacturers. The topics are listed alphabetically for ease of reading; the order does not represent prioritization or other criteria.



Managing the Supply Chain

Pollution

Manufacturers should source wood pulp or fiber from suppliers that do not use elemental chlorine bleaching processes, which can contribute to air and water pollution.

Sustainable Forestry

Unsustainable paper pulp sourcing can result in deforestation, decreased biodiversity, land and water degradation, and climate change impacts. Manufacturers should source paper pulp from suppliers that have been verified by a credible certification program for sustainable forestry practices.



Use of Resources

Climate and Energy

Component processing and final manufacturing consume significant amounts of electricity and energy, leading to greenhouse gas emissions. Manufacturers should procure from suppliers that help abate these impacts by measuring, tracking, and reporting energy use and greenhouse gas emissions, with a focus on reduction. They should also perform preventative maintenance on equipment, replace inefficient equipment, and encourage efficient energy behaviors throughout their operations.

Disposal and End-of-Life

Unmanaged landfills or landfills without methane capture systems release greenhouse gas emissions, which are linked to climate change. Also, littered diaper products can foul land and waterways and may potentially harbor disease. Manufacturers should design diaper products to minimize material use while maintaining

uncompromised performance. Manufacturers should account for end-of-life options in order to impact the environment in acceptable ways.

Packaging

Packaging design should be optimized to ensure that packaging performs its essential functions of containment and protection while minimizing use of materials, energy resources and environmental impacts across the life cycle of the packaged product. Under-packaging and over-packaging can both lead to increased impacts. These impacts may be mitigated by using more energy-efficient manufacturing, selecting recyclable and sustainably managed renewable materials, and encouraging consumer recycling.