



ACCOUNTABILITY STANDARDS

At Gemline, we believe there is always a better way to do business, one that creates a lasting, positive impact on people, the planet, and the products we make. Our betterway® Accountability Standards serve as the foundation of this commitment, guiding our actions and driving meaningful progress.

As a Public Benefit Corporation, we go beyond words, we are legally required to uphold our commitment to responsible business practices and demonstrate measurable progress. Additionally, as a Certified B Corporation, we voluntarily meet the highest standards of social and environmental performance, transparency, and accountability.

Each of our betterway® Accountability Standards provides a framework for continuous improvement, and we are committed to updating and strengthening these guidelines annually, for ourselves, our brand partners, and our customers.

By holding ourselves to the highest standards and embracing transparent reporting, we strive to make a real, measurable difference in the communities we serve and the world we share. For us, betterway® is more than a standard, it's a commitment to doing better in every way.

ACCOUNTABILITY STANDARDS SUMMARY

	BRAND STANDARDS	BRAND CERTIFICATIONS	PRODUCT ACCOUNTABILITY STANDARDS
FOCUS AREAS	Responsible Sourcing	Corporate Sustainability	Cleaner Materials
	Chemical Elimination	Environmental Impact	Natural Materials & Fibers
	Environmental Stewardship	Ethical Business Practices	Recycled Materials

betterway® BRAND STANDARDS

I. RESPONSIBLE SOURCING

100% of Gemline's Tier 1 and Tier 2 supplier facilities engage with third-party auditors to conduct audits using international frameworks like SMETA, BSCI, and SA 8000 to verify compliance.

Gemline is committed to ensuring that our supply chains, comprised of over 30 suppliers, are clean, fair, safe, non-discriminatory, and uphold the highest ethical and legal standards. Our Code of Conduct addresses social, environmental, and ethical requirements to establish and uphold the industry's highest standards.

GEMLINE PRODUCTS*

Goal	Current Status	Goal Achieved Date	Reporting Frequency
100% of Tier 1 and Tier 2 Suppliers complete a social accountability audit.	100% in 2025	2010	Annually

On an annual basis, and when we begin work with a new brand partner, we communicate our requirements to ensure that our brand partners have in place or implement their own manufacturing codes of conduct that meet or exceed Gemline's requirements.

BRAND PARTNERS

Goal	Current Status	Goal Achieved Date	Reporting Frequency
100% of suppliers have signed the Supplier Code of Conduct or maintain an equivalent Code of Conduct of their own.	100% in 2025	2021	Annually

*Gemline Products are marketed and sold under the following brands: Aviana™, Elements, Gemline®, Gourmet Expressions®, Heritage Supply, La Cuisine™, Merrimack Hat Co.™, RuMe®, Travis & Wells® and Vertex®.

II. CHEMICAL ELIMINATION

Gemline works to ensure that 100% of the products we sell are made without harmful chemicals in order to safeguard the health of our employees, customers, and the communities we serve.

A. BISPHENOL A (BPA)

Gemline requires that 100% of the products it manufactures, sources, and sells, as well as those from our brand partners, that are intended to come into contact with food or liquids for human consumption, are BPA-free.

BPA is a synthetic chemical commonly used in the production of plastics and resins. It is often found in products like water bottles, food containers, and certain kinds of packaging. There is growing concern over potential health risks of products that contain BPA, as it can leach into food and beverages, especially when the plastic is heated or worn down.

GEMLINE PRODUCTS*

Goal	Current Status	Goal Achieved Date	Reporting Frequency
100% BPA-free	100% in 2025	2015	Annually

When we begin working with a new brand partner or introduce new products from our brand partners, we communicate our requirement to ensure that all products meet Gemline's BPA-free standard.

B. PFAS – Perfluoroalkyl and Polyfluoroalkyl Substances (PFAS)

Gemline requires that 100% of products it manufactures, sources and sells, as well as products from our brand partners, do not have intentionally added PFAS.

PFAS make up a class of forever chemicals that are often used to make textiles stain-resistant and water-repellent, and to keep food from sticking to packaging or cookware. Because PFAS break down slowly, they can leak into the environment, leading to accumulation in soil and water. Repeated exposure can build up in wildlife and humans over time, and may be toxic.

GEMLINE PRODUCTS*

Goal	Current Status	Goal Achieved Date	Reporting Frequency
100% no intentionally added PFAS	100% in 2025	2022	Annually

When we begin working with a new brand partner or introduce new products from our brand partners, we communicate our requirement to ensure that all products meet Gemline's made with no intentionally added PFAS standard.

BRAND PARTNERS

Goal	Current Status	Implemented Since	Reporting Frequency
100% no intentionally added PFAS	100% in 2025	2022	Annually

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C. PHTHALATES

Gemline requires that 100% of products it manufactures, sources and sells, as well as products from our brand partners, are made without phthalates.

Phthalates are chemicals, often used as “plasticizers” in plastic products, to make them softer and more flexible. They are most commonly found in cosmetics, personal care items, food packaging, medical devices, and building materials, but can also be found in waterproof or coated fabrics, faux leather and vinyl bags. Phthalates are endocrine disrupters and exposure can lead to a range of health problems, including reproductive issues, developmental delays, and increased risk of certain cancers.

GEMLINE PRODUCTS*

Goal	Current Status	Goal Achieved Date	Reporting Frequency
100% made without phthalates	100% in 2025	2019	Annually

When we begin working with a new brand partner or introduce new products from our brand partners, we communicate our requirement to ensure that all products meet Gemline’s made without phthalates standard.

D. POLYVINYL CHLORIDE (PVC)

Gemline is working toward achieving a 100% PVC-free product line and requires that all products it manufactures and sells, as well as those products from our brand partners, are PVC-free.

PVC is a type of plastic polymer known for being relatively inexpensive to produce, is commonly used as a backing material in bags, and can be found in packaging, inks, and many other inexpensive items sold in the promotional products industry. PVC is hazardous to produce and dispose of, and poses serious risks to human health and our ecosystems. It has a high carbon footprint and is minimally recyclable.

GEMLINE PRODUCTS*

Goal	Current Status	Goal Achieved Date	Reporting Frequency
100% PVC-free	100% in 2025	2025	Annually

When we begin working with a new brand partner or introduce new products from our brand partners, we communicate our requirement to ensure that all products meet Gemline’s PVC-free standard.

BRAND PARTNERS

Goal	Current Status	Goal Achieved Date	Reporting Frequency
100% PVC-free	98% in 2025	Revised target: by the end of 2028	Annually

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III. ENVIRONMENTAL STEWARDSHIP

Gemline's goal is to design, build and sell products that minimize greenhouse gas emissions and align with our circular product design principles. We are dedicated to creating products that are built for longevity, made from natural fibers or recycled materials, and are fully recyclable, subsequently reducing their environmental impacts.

A. GHG GREENHOUSE GAS EMISSIONS

Gemline is committed to developing and executing strategies to achieve a 10% annual reduction in carbon emissions.

We are measuring and managing our Scope 1, 2, and 3 carbon emissions as part of our ongoing efforts to protect the planet.

GEMLINE CORPORATION*

Goal	Current Status	Goal Achieved Date	Reporting Frequency
10% Annual reduction in carbon emissions	Increased 17% in 2025 due to operational changes/growth	Revised target: resume 10% annual reductions by 2026	Annually

We encourage our brand partners to measure their annual greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions, set measurable reduction targets, and implement actionable plans to achieve these goals.

BRAND PARTNERS

Goal	Current Status	Goal Achieved Date	Reporting Frequency
N/A	MiiR – The Climate Label Certified**	2025	Annually

** MiiR earned Climate Neutral Certification in 2020 and transitioned to The Climate Label Certified in 2025. [> Learn more](#)

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B. PREFERRED MATERIALS

Gemline prioritizes circular product design principles that focus on long-term impact. We are committed to using recycled and sustainably-sourced natural materials and fibers; designing products with recyclable materials whenever possible; and offering high-quality products built for longevity, including those intended to reduce the use of single-use plastics.

1. Recycled Materials

Gemline encourages the use of certified recycled materials in the products and packaging we manufacture and source, as well as those from our brand partners. Using recycled materials in products and packaging reduces demand for raw resources, diverts waste from landfills, and lowers energy consumption compared to virgin materials, resulting in reduced carbon emissions and environmental impact.

GEMLINE PRODUCTS			
Goal	Current Status	Goal Achieved Date	Reporting Frequency
100% of recycled content is certified recycled content (when recycled content is used)	100% in 2025	2020	Annually
50% of all products contain certified recycled content	23% in 2025	By the end of 2030	Annually
100% of all packaging contains recycled content	100% of shipping cartons contain at least 85% post-consumer recycled content 100% of primary product packaging (boxes) contains at least 60% post-consumer recycled content**	2020 2025	Annually

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**Legacy packaging inventory in use during transition period.

We encourage our brand partners to use certified recycled content and recycled packaging.

BRAND PARTNERS

Goal	Current Status	Goal Achieved Date	Reporting Frequency
100% of recycled content is certified recycled content (when recycled content is used)	100% in 2025	2020	Annually

2. Natural Materials & Fibers

Gemline encourages the use of sustainably-sourced natural materials, such as wood and paper, as well as natural fibers like jute, bamboo, and cotton in our products. These materials generally have a lower carbon footprint, require less energy and fewer resources to produce than synthetic alternatives, and typically involve the use of fewer chemicals in their growth and processing. Additionally, natural fibers are renewable, with some, like bamboo and jute, growing quickly.

GEMLINE PRODUCTS

Goal	Current Status	Goal Achieved Date	Reporting Frequency
100% sustainably-cultivated natural materials (when natural materials are used)	12%	Revised target: By the end of 2032	Annually

We encourage our brand partners to use certified natural materials and fibers in products when natural materials are used.

BRAND PARTNERS

Goal	Current Status	Goal Achieved Date	Reporting Frequency
100% sustainably-cultivated natural materials (when natural materials are used)	Out of the Woods® Washable Paper products are FSC-Certified (FSC® C153080) Moleskine paper products are FSC-Certified (FSC® C175379)	2021 2008	Annually

We encourage our brand partners to use certified recycled content and recycled packaging.

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3. Recyclable Materials

Gemline actively supports circularity in packaging and products to reduce the amount of waste that ends up in landfills and reduce environmental pollution. We encourage the minimization of packaging, use of packaging materials that are recyclable or compostable at end of life, and circular design of products so that they can be recycled.

GEMLINE PRODUCTS*

Goal	Current Status	Goal Achieved Date	Reporting Frequency
100% of packaging is recyclable	100% of shipping cartons 100% of primary product packaging	2020 2025**	Annually

We encourage our brand partners to use recyclable or compostable at end-of-life materials, and circular design of products so that they can be recycled.

4. Longevity

Gemline supports the use of reusable water bottles, food containers, cutlery, and grocery bags as durable alternatives to disposable plastics, helping to reduce waste and promote more responsible consumption habits. This impact is further enhanced when these products are made with recycled materials, natural fibers, or are designed to be recyclable at the end of their lifecycle, contributing to a more circular economy and reducing their overall environmental footprint.

GEMLINE PRODUCTS*

Goal	Current Status	Goal Achieved Date	Reporting Frequency
100% of products designed to replace single-use plastics are also made with a certified preferred material and/or are recyclable	54%	By the end of 2032	Annually

We encourage our brand partners to use certified preferred materials instead of virgin materials, when designing products that are meant to replace single-use plastics, which can help lessen their carbon-footprint.

BRAND PARTNER

Goal	Current Status	Goal Achieved Date	Reporting Frequency
50% of products designed to replace single use plastics are also made with a certified preferred materials and/or are recyclable	22%	By the end of 2032	Annually

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**Legacy packaging inventory in use during transition period.

betterway® BRAND CERTIFICATIONS

Gemline believes in the importance of third-party validation to demonstrate our commitment to corporate sustainability, environmental impact, and ethical business practices. We encourage our brand partners to pursue similar certifications. These certifications not only help customers make more informed purchasing decisions, but also enable them to align their spending with their own environmental and social values.

 Certified B Corporation	Certified B Corporations (B Corps) are for-profit companies committed to using business as a force for good, certified by the non-profit organization B Lab. B Corps meet high verified standards of social and environmental performance, transparency, and accountability to all of their stakeholders.
 THE CLIMATE LABEL CERTIFIED	The Climate Label Certified companies earn their certification from The Change Climate Project – A 501(c)3 tech nonprofit, by implementing an internal carbon fee, which is applied to every ton of their emissions. They then must allot the resulting pool of funds to projects that cut emissions across their operations and supply chains, and fund high-impact carbon removal and mitigation projects worldwide. Certification requires companies to track and report cradle-to-customer emissions.
 CERTIFIED E EVERGREEN®	Certified Evergreen is a designation by the Evergreen Certified Program from the Tugboat Institute. Certified Evergreen companies embody sustainable business practices with a focus on creating lasting value and fostering a positive impact on their stakeholders.
 ecovadis	EcoVadis is a globally recognized assessment platform that rates businesses' sustainability based on four key categories: environmental impact, labor, human rights standards, ethics, and procurement practices.
 SBN Sustainable Business Network of Massachusetts	The Sustainable Business Network of Massachusetts is part of a nationwide organization, the American Sustainable Business Council, that is committed to building a stakeholder-driven sustainable economy that supports equitable, regenerative and just economy that benefits all – people and planet.

betterway® PRODUCT ACCOUNTABILITY STANDARDS

For our preferred materials, we have outlined the third-party certifications that we consider most impactful in supporting Gemline's Betterway® Accountability Standards. We are committed to obtaining and using as many of these certifications and materials across our own product lines and encourage our brand partners to also use these materials in their applicable products.

CERTIFICATIONS		
Cleaner Materials		Bluesign® is an independent certification and system for sustainable textile production, focusing on reducing environmental impact and ensuring safe working conditions. It aims to eliminate harmful chemicals and substances from the manufacturing process, from raw materials to finished products, making it safer for both people and the environment. The certification covers aspects like water and air emissions, chemical use, resource efficiency, and worker safety, ensuring that products meet high environmental standards.
		Oeko-Tex® is an independent, globally recognized certification system that tests textiles and textile products for harmful substances. When a product is certified under Oeko-Tex Standard 100, it means every component (from fabric to buttons, zippers, threads, etc.) has been tested against strict criteria and verified to be free from substances that are harmful to human health.
Natural Materials & Fibers		Forrest Stewardship Council (FSC) certification ensures that products made from wood, paper, and other forest materials come from forests that are responsibly managed with high environmental, social, and economic standards. FSC-certified forests are managed in ways that prioritize biodiversity, protect water quality, prohibit deforestation, and respect the rights of indigenous peoples and forest workers.
		The Global Organic Textile Standard (GOTS) is an internationally recognized certification that ensures cotton is grown without the use of harmful chemicals, pesticides, or synthetic fertilizers and that it meets strict environmental and social criteria throughout the entire supply chain, from farming to manufacturing.

	CERTIFICATIONS	DESCRIPTIONS
Recycled Materials		The Global Recycled Standard (GRS) is a certification developed by the Textile Exchange to verify recycled content in products. GRS is a full product standard to verify and track recycled raw materials through the supply chain. It also includes processing criteria to prevent the use of potentially hazardous chemicals, and verifies positive social or environmental production at the facilities. GRS-certified products must contain at least 20% recycled content.
		RCS tracks and verifies the presence and amount of recycled material in a finished product. RCS 100 certified products contain at least 95% recycled content. RCS Blended products contain 5-94% recycled content. With a focus solely on verifying recycled material without specific criteria for environmental or social impact.
		Aware™ traceability technology provides transparency from source to product, with a Digital Product Passport that authenticates the recycled materials used in textiles.
		Tritan Renew is a copolyester made by Eastman through a unique advanced recycling process that breaks down plastic waste into its basic chemical building blocks allowing plastic materials to be recycled repeatedly without degrading quality. Tritan Renew contains up to 50% certified recycled content, verified by ISCC (International Sustainability & Carbon Certification) using mass balance allocation.
		Repreve® is a performance polyester fiber made from recycled post-consumer waste, such as plastic bottles. Created by Unifi, the company has developed its own recycling and processing centers to support a closed-loop system for producing the fiber, which helps reduce waste in the textile industry.

CERTIFICATIONS		DESCRIPTIONS
Recycled Materials		PrimaLoft® is high-performance, insulation made using up to 100% recycled materials, sourced primarily from plastic bottles.
		Ocean Bound Plastic (OBP) is plastic waste defined as “at risk of ending up in the ocean.” OBP is estimated to generate 80% of plastic marine litter. The OBP Certification Program is designed to encourage the removal of Ocean Bound Plastic from the environment by adding value in effectively collecting and treating it before it reaches the ocean.