



SL Category Hider

Control which WooCommerce categories are visible on your store

Version 1.0.3 | WordPress Plugin User Manual

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1. Overview

SL Category Hider lets you hide selected WooCommerce product categories — and every product assigned to them — from your shop page, category archives, category widgets, and navigation menus, without deleting anything or touching a single product's own status. Products in a hidden category stay reachable by direct link and through site search, but they won't appear in shop/category browsing while hidden.

It's built for the situations that come up constantly in a retail dive shop:

- Hiding a **seasonal category** (like winter drysuit accessories) outside of season
- Tidying up **empty categories** so customers don't land on a blank page
- Keeping **staff-only or internal categories** out of shop navigation
- Running a **quiet clearance section** that's reachable only by direct link

Data & privacy: the plugin stores its settings locally in your WordPress database. It makes no external API calls and doesn't transmit any data off your site.

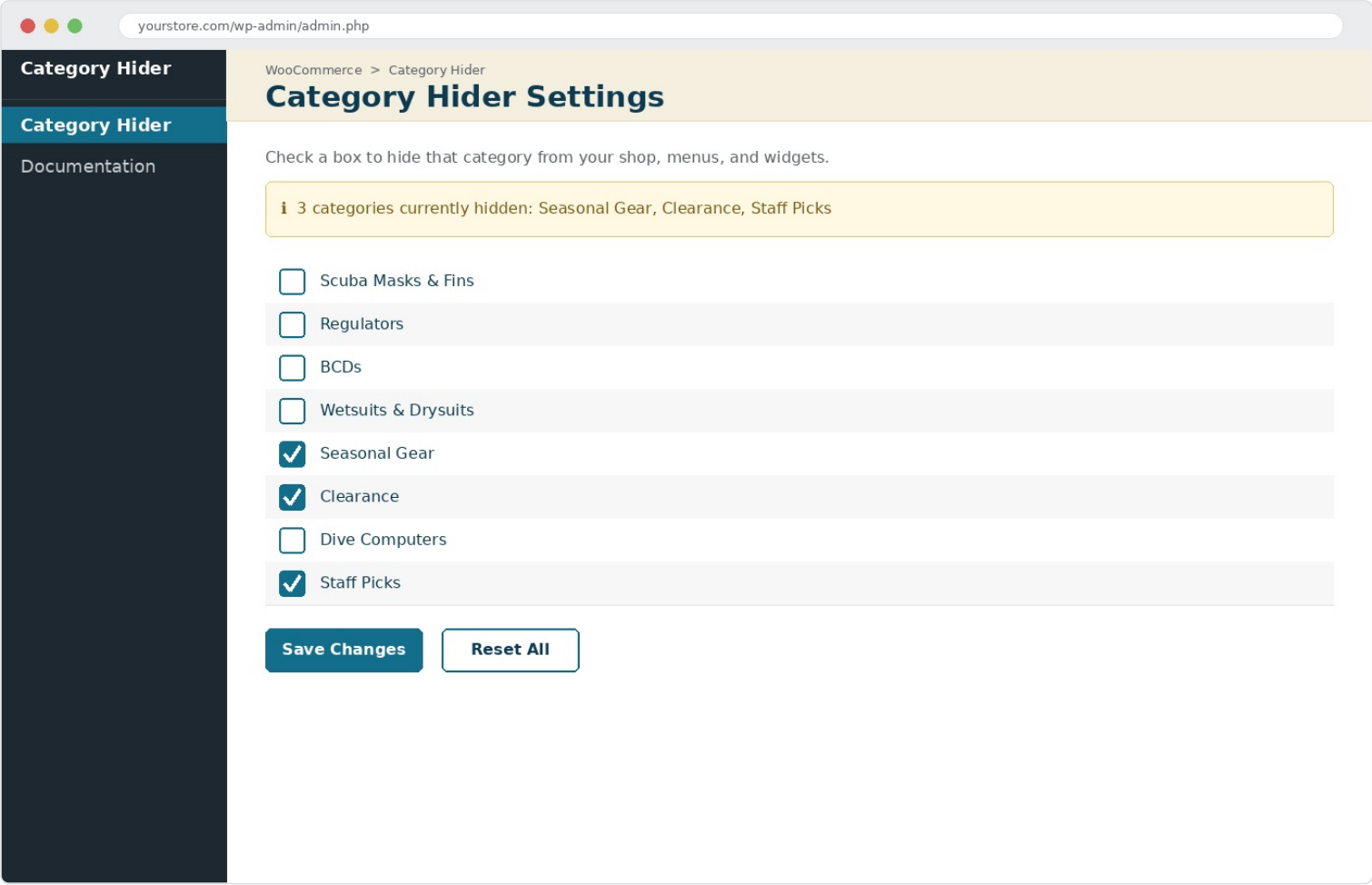
2. Installation

1. Upload the `sl-category-hider` folder to `/wp-content/plugins/` (or upload the zip directly via **Plugins → Add New → Upload Plugin**).
2. Go to **Plugins** in your WordPress dashboard and click **Activate** next to SL Category Hider.
3. A new **Category Hider** menu item appears directly in the main WordPress admin sidebar — it's its own top-level menu, not tucked under WooCommerce.
4. Open it to see every product category on your store, each with a checkbox.

Requirement	Minimum
WordPress	5.0 or higher
WooCommerce	3.0 or higher
PHP	7.2 or higher

3. Using the Settings Screen

The entire plugin lives on one screen. Every WooCommerce category is listed with a checkbox — check it to hide that category, uncheck it to bring it back.



The Category Hider settings screen — checked categories are hidden from the shop.

Hiding a Category

1. Go to **WooCommerce → Category Hider**.
2. Check the box next to the category you want to hide.
3. Click **Save Changes**.

Unhiding a Category

1. Go to **WooCommerce → Category Hider**.
2. Uncheck the box.
3. Click **Save Changes**.

Resetting Everything

Click **Reset All** and confirm the prompt to unhide every category at once — handy after a seasonal cleanup or when handing the store off to someone else.

Parent and child categories are completely independent checkboxes: checking a parent category does not automatically hide its subcategories, and vice versa. If you want a whole category tree hidden, check the parent and every subcategory individually.

Tip: the yellow info banner at the top of the settings screen always lists exactly which categories are currently hidden, so you never have to scroll the checkbox list to check.

4. Where Hidden Categories Disappear From

Once a category is hidden, both the category itself and every product assigned to it are removed from:

- The main **Shop** page and that category's own archive page — products in a hidden category are excluded from the product listing itself, not just from navigation
- The **Shop** page's category grid
- **Product category widgets** in your sidebar or footer (both the list and dropdown styles)
- Navigation menus that pull categories dynamically
- WooCommerce's built-in **category shortcodes**

It is **not** removed from:

- Direct links to products in that category (a customer with a saved link can still reach the product page itself)
- Site search results for the products themselves
- Admin-side product editing screens — every category still shows normally when you're logged into wp-admin, so managing hidden categories is unaffected

Note: hiding a category removes its products from shop and category browsing, but doesn't touch the products themselves — their status, stock, and visibility settings in WooCommerce are completely unchanged. If you need a product fully unavailable for purchase regardless of category, set it to *Draft* or *Out of stock* in WooCommerce directly.

5. Advanced Notes & Caching

If you're using a caching plugin (WP Super Cache, W3 Total Cache, LiteSpeed Cache, or your host's built-in cache), changes may not appear immediately on the front end. After saving changes in Category Hider:

1. Go to your caching plugin's settings.
2. Clear or purge all cache.
3. Hard-refresh the shop page (`Ctrl+F5` on Windows/Linux, `Cmd+Shift+R` on Mac) to confirm.

The plugin file itself lives at `/wp-content/plugins/sl-category-hider/sl-category-hider.php`, and settings are stored as a single WordPress option — nothing is written to custom database tables, so uninstalling the plugin is clean and reversible.

6. Troubleshooting & FAQ

Issue	What to check
Category still shows up after hiding it	Clear any caching plugin, then hard-refresh. Confirm you clicked Save Changes.
Products in a hidden category aren't reachable at all	That's expected for shop/category browsing — they're intentionally excluded from listings while hidden. If direct links and search aren't working either, check their individual visibility/stock status in WooCommerce, since that's controlled separately.
Checkbox list doesn't show a category	New categories appear automatically — refresh the settings page after creating one in Products → Categories.
Settings didn't save	Check for a JavaScript error from a conflicting plugin (open browser dev tools, <code>F12</code>) and confirm your user account has the Administrator role, since that's what this plugin's settings page requires.
Hiding a parent category didn't hide its subcategories	This is expected — parent and child category checkboxes are independent. Check each subcategory individually if you want the whole tree hidden.

Does this affect SEO? Hidden categories are excluded from on-site navigation but this plugin does not add `noindex` tags — for full search-engine removal, pair it with your SEO plugin's indexing controls.

Can I hide a category temporarily for a sale? Yes — that's exactly the intended use. Toggle the checkbox off again once the sale or off-season period ends.

7. Quick Reference

Hide a category	Category Hider → check the box → Save Changes
Unhide a category	Category Hider → uncheck the box → Save Changes
Unhide everything	Category Hider → Reset All → confirm
See what's currently hidden	Yellow info banner at the top of the settings screen
Changes not showing on the site	Clear your caching plugin, then hard-refresh

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