

Pending FTC Changes to the Care Label Rule...

The Federal Trade Commission is considering four changes to the current Care Labeling Rule, 16CFR423.

- ... To require that an item that can be safely home laundered must be labeled with washing instructions.
- ... To allow an instruction for "wet drycleaning".
- ... To clarify what constitutes a "reasonable basis" for care instructions.
- ... To harmonize water temperatures with AATCC standards.

For a complete discussion of these pending changes go back to the Summer 1999 LabelTalk.

These changes have been pending at the Commission for about a year since they were first announced in the Federal Register Vol. 63, No. 89.

It is our opinion here at TIA that the Commission will hold off promulgating these changes until they can make the necessary modifications in the approved symbols to coordinate with the pending harmonized, universal symbology from ASTM and ISO/GINETEX. We believe the Commission will then publish a single revision to the Rule that will include the four changes above along with the harmonized symbol set. We feel this is a prudent and efficient

course of action for the Commission that saves the industry from frequent modifications to the Rule and the inevitable associated confusion.

However, it should be noted that the Commission has not deferred enforcing the current

Rule and all its requirements. As recently as last month the FTC settled the last of four cases

brought last May against manufacturers accused of violating provisions of the Care Labeling Rule. This latest settlement included a penalty of \$200,000.

... the Commission has not deferred ENFORCING the current Rule and ALL its requirements.



Harmonized Symbol Progress...

Considering the complexities of harmonizing care symbols between Europe, Asia and the U.S. the progress so far has been staggering. Hard working teams of negotiators have come to agreement on a single symbol set that will accomplish the objectives of ISO 3758 and ASTM D5489 with a single symbol set that satisfies the needs of European manufacturers and consumers as well as their American counterparts. The PROPOSED harmonized symbol set is basically the current ASTM symbols with minor changes. The new PROPOSED symbols now must be balloted among all the stakeholders. Any negative

votes or comments must then be reconciled and, if that reconciliation requires significant changes to a symbol or a definition, then the balloting process must be repeated. Finally, when all parties are satisfied with the result ASTM and ISO will publish the new standard. The Federal Trade Commission must then make the necessary changes to the Rule to allow the new harmonized symbols to be used on care labels in the U.S. And that's all there is to it! In our opinion, expect a harmonized, universal care symbol set some time around the summer of 2001.



A Closer Look at Care Labeling Trends

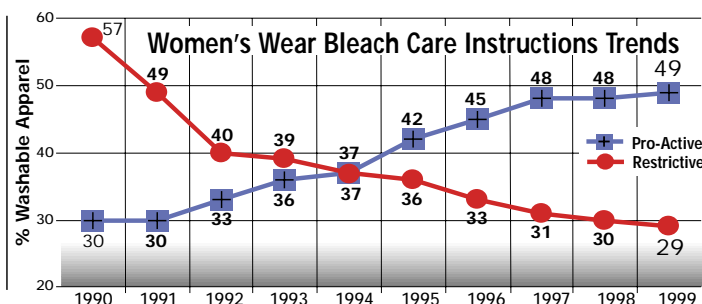
Previous issues of *LabelTalk* have discussed labeling and care instruction trends in general. This issue will look at care instruction trends in Women's Wear.

Women's apparel is easily the largest segment of U.S. retail apparel sales. In 1999 Women's wear accounted for over 55% of all retail dollars spent on apparel. Men's and Children's apparel shared the remaining 45% of the \$160 Billion dollar American apparel market. An excellent source for details on the U.S. apparel industry is the American Apparel Manufacturers Association and the various committees within AAMA. You can reach AAMA at 703-524-1864.

The trends in Bleach Care instructions in Women's apparel are pronounced and long term.

Every day more apparel marketers and other professionals realize the benefits of pro-active bleach labeling. Our research, which we share freely with the trade, shows that apparel consumers intuitively understand that their investment is better protected when the garment can be laundered with some type of bleach. They know bleachability means better stain removal and overall cleaning. They translate these benefits into enhanced perceptions of "quality", "value" and "durability". Now, with some type of bleach in nearly half of the 620 Million wash loads done in the U.S. every week and bleach in nearly every U.S. household, an affirmative bleach instruction also translates into "easy care" for the consumer.

The 29 (and declining) percent of women's wear marketers still telling their prospective consumers to "Do Not Bleach" are finding those consumers are reading that instruction as "Do Not Buy".



Consumers Know Laundry Products...

During an average week U.S. consumers launder over 620 Million loads of laundry. About 580 Million of those wash loads are done in single-family households.

In these households you will find a fairly standard assortment of laundry products, but a wide range of usage patterns.

All together, consumers are using some type of bleach in nearly half of all

wash loads. Clearly, U.S. consumers are pretty savvy when it comes to which laundry products are appropriate. Over 300 million wash loads are laundered every week with some

type of bleach and consumers select the right bleach for the job every time. Consumers not only know the difference between hypochlorite and color-safe bleach, but they obviously

know when to use them for whitening, disinfecting, stain removal or brighter colors.

Four out of five consumers read care labels before making a purchase

decision. Two out of three of them will even switch brands to get the care procedures that fit their life style. Any "Do Not..." instruction could be a deal-killer, while accurate, affirmative instructions can be deal-makers. Remember, 73% of consumers equate an affirmative bleach instruction, either "Bleach When Needed" or "Non-chlorine Bleach", with Quality, Value, Durability and Easy Care. We believe in small solutions to big problems.

Product	Household Penetration	Wash Load Penetration
Detergent	98%	98%*
Fabric Softener	90%	73%
Hypochlorite Bleach	87%	15%
Separate Color-Safe Bleach	47%	11%
Soil/Stain Remover	76%	10%

*(77% w/o bleach, 22% with)

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